**“Global Anglicanism—Where Are We Now?”**

**An address given by the Most Revd Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon**

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First of all, I offer my thanks to Canon Maurice Elliot, director of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, for his invitation to speak tonight about the Anglican Communion. It is a joy to be in Ireland, within the context of the Church of Ireland, and within the Diocese of Dublin. Global Anglicanism is nothing without local Anglicanism. So let me begin a few of my own observations about the Irish Anglican context.

With your roots going back to St Patrick, you are the most ancient of the churches of the Anglican Communion. From the Reformation, you have shaped Anglicanism in particular ways. I think of the influence of leaders of the Irish Church such as like Archbishop James Usher, Bishop Jeremy Taylor, Dean Jeremy Swift, to the present time with people like Robin Eames.

I think today of the contribution of your primate, the Archbishop of Armagh, Dr Richard Clarke, who leads the Primate’s Task Group and is the Anglican co-chair of our bilateral dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox churches. I think of the Irish Anglicans who are elected members of the Anglican Consultative Council—your own director, Dr Maurice Elliot and Mr Wilfred Baker—and their contribution to ACC-16 which met last year in Zambia. Dr Andrew Pierce of the Irish School of Ecumenics has given sustained expertise guidance to the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order (IASCUFO).

The Church of Ireland Your gives a disproportionately high level of ecumenical leadership within the Anglican Communion. In addition to Archbishop Clarke’s role in the Anglican-Orthodox dialogue, Bishop Michael Burrows is the co-chair of the Anglican-Old Catholic Council. Archbishop Michael Jackson is a member of the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox dialogue, and is active is so many other ways in both ecumenical and interreligious dialogues of the Anglican Communion. Bishop Harold Miller is the outgoing co-chair of the Anglican-Methodist dialogue. And the Revd Helen Steed, serving as a parish priest in Belfast, is a leading member of the Anglican-Reformed dialogue.

I am wondering why members of this church are so disproportionately represented on our global ecumenical dialogues. I can only conclude that they represent the costly commitment to local ecumenism on this island.

*Global Anglicanism—Where are we now?*

The answer to this question depends on who you ask. You have asked me, and so I will offer some reflections that arise from my experience, first an African archbishop from the Church of Nigeria; second, as someone who has worked at the Communion level for a long time. During my 25 years as a bishop and as an archbishop, I have travelled extensively throughout the Anglican Communion, and I have come to love as brothers and sisters in Christ Anglicans from around the Communion, from every theological and pastoral perspective. My third perspective is that of the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion for the past 20 months. As Secretary General, I support all four of the Instruments of Communion: the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Anglican Consultative Council, the Lambeth Conference, and the Primates’ Meeting. I bring a unique perspective, but mine is one among many.

Before I speak from my experience, I would like to draw your attention to the perspective of a recent book that I have been reading, a collection of essays edited by David Goodhew, under the title of *Growth and Decline in the Anglican Communion: 1980 to the Present*, which was just published this year. If this book is not in the CITI library, it ought to be.

As the title suggests, the book is about growth and decline in the Anglican Communion, numerically. And the picture in mixed. From 1970 to 2010 the Anglican Communion as a whole grew numerically from 46 million people, to 86 million people; this figure is likely much higher in 2017. So, this is good news, if numbers are a sign of health, which in part, they are. The patterns of growth and decline are uneven, and not easily explained. The Global South has experienced extraordinary growth, but not everywhere. And the Global North has experienced significant numerical decline, but not everywhere. As David Goodhew writes,

Numbers are not the only thing that matters in the Anglican Communion, by any means. The Christian faith started with just one person, in a tomb. The numerical strength or weakness of a community is not a referendum on its actual worth.[[1]](#footnote-1)

From the findings of this book, we can happily conclude—especially someone like me, an evangelical Anglican who comes from a church with tremendous numerical growth—that Global Anglicanism is getting stronger and stronger. But Anglicans in the so-called Global North are taking lead in certain kinds of evangelism for your contexts such as the Alpha course, Fresh Expressions, cathedral-related outreach, Messy-church, programmes for Reform and Renewal, many more such initiatives.

However, one of the essays in the book notes that a serious challenge to the numerical figures of the Anglican Communion today could be severely revised if we were to divide on doctrinal or ethical grounds. As one of the essays concludes:

...Anglicans will continue to navigate the global and local features of their communion, where none of the churches exist in isolation from each other but, at the same time, no global body makes decisions for those local churches. How tens of millions of Anglicans around the world work through their differences in the coming years will either be a model for other Christians or a path to avoid.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The question of the unity and integrity of the Anglican Communion is where I would like to begin my reflections on the health of Global Anglicanism, and to identify the proverbial “elephant in the room”.

*The tensions of living in communion*

From my perspective, there is a health to the Anglican Communion; but it also faces many hurts and challenges. All churches experience some of these challenges across the global ecumenical spectrum: economic decline, escalating differences between the rich and the poor. In too many places simple poverty grinds down the means of survival. There is political uncertainty and instability, with increased environmental fragility. There is the massive displacement of people who are refugees and migrants. There is violent persecution of religious minorities, especially of Christians. Inter-religious tensions are growing.

All of these contexts challenge the faith and witness of the Church deeply, and call us to mission in new ways in uncertain contexts. At a time in history in which the life and witness of Christians as ministers of reconciliation is needed as at no other time, our mission is being distorted by the dispiriting and destructive dynamic of Anglican conflict over human sexuality, between the provinces of the Anglican Communion, as well as within them. Our differences on this question can lead us to question the faith of one another, and can impede our common mission with one another to the world.

The stakes around the internal health of wholeness of the Anglican Communion are not just about growing our 86+ million members around the world. It is about being the Church; it is about fulfilling the Great Commission in evangelism and the broadest mission of the Church, to be the sign and servant of God’s design for the world, which is to gather humanity and all creation into communion under the Lordship of Christ (*cf.* Ephesians 1.10). When we are faithful to this mission, we will naturally grow.

What I have seen in these past 20 months as Secretary General lead me to the working hypothesis that in spite of our divisions, the Holy Spirit is faithful, and continues to bless the life and mission of the churches of the Anglican Communion. The two defining moments for me from the past year are the gathering and meeting of the Primates in Canterbury in January 2016 and, eleven weeks later, the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council—ACC-16—at Lusaka, Zambia.

*The Primates’ Meeting & Gathering*

The 2016 meeting and gathering of Primates attracted the attention of both secular and church journalists alike, and the blogosphere were so full of comment, commentary, and interpretation that I could barely keep up with it. The good news is that the world noticed the Anglican Communion! The puzzling and disturbing news is that these commentaries varied so widely, that I have been left wondering whether they were talking about the same meeting that I attended.

The Primates’ gathering was soaked in prayer and the experience of the Holy Spirit among us. Anglicans from all over the world—and indeed, from our beloved ecumenical partners—kept the primates in their prayer for months before they met. People from around the world prayed for the primates from around the world. At Canterbury Cathedral there were no special service for the primates; they gathered at the regular times of daily prayer with the people and clergy of the Diocese of Canterbury with their archbishop. The Community of St Anselm, an intentional monastic community established in which 35 young people from around the world and from a wide ecumenical representation were present. I prayed. And the Holy Spirit heard our prayers. I can never remember another Anglican event that has been so deeply upheld in prayer.

The primates received greetings from around the ecumenical world. I can’t read them all to you, but let me read the powerful message from the World Council of Churches:

The Anglican Communion has offered so much to the churches’ vocation of striving for justice and peace and for visible unity. The ecumenical movement continues to look to you for leadership and inspiration. As you meet, you will contemplate places of brokenness and pain in our world, and we trust through your witness and commitment to a common faith in Christ you will find ways to motivate Christians beyond your own communion towards renewed expressions of mission and *diakonia*.

Unity is a gift and a calling. God’s will for all of creation is reconciliation through the love of Christ, and that we might live together in unity guided by the power of the Holy Spirit. This aspect of our faith, this content of our hope, is not optional, but rather is a reflection of God’s own being.

The Primates engaged in a real dialogue. After the meeting was over, a journalist challenged me in public about whether such a dialogue could really change peoples’ minds. In response I said that the purpose of any dialogue is never to change anyone’s mind; it is about something much more difficult: it is about *understanding* another person. And this was not easy for the primates. They had to listen and understand their different contexts, the different challenges to authentic witness to Christ and the good news of the Kingdom of God. Some of those contexts are places where Christians are persecuted and are the victims of religiously motivated violence, some are where Anglicans are small minority churches, and in others where Christianity itself is a minority religion, some are places where the effects of the environmental crisis is so severe that entire communities will disappear. Anglicans are among the world’s refugees, migrants and asylum seekers; other Anglicans are among those who seek to address this current crisis, and indeed, welcome displaced peoples into their own nations, churches, and homes. The primates are all well aware of the state of the world today, and both the call that the current crisis makes on a common and united response as a family of churches.

And in the mix of all that threatens the future of our fragile earth and the human family is *the* issue that keeps Anglicans from fulfilling the mission given to us: our disagreement on questions on human sexuality, and more directly, how the Church ought to respond pastorally to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Intersex members of our communities. For the Anglican Communion, the direction was given by the Lambeth Conference of 1998, in its Resolution 1.10.[[3]](#footnote-3)

In most parts of the Communion, Anglicans must go much further to enact the double direction of the Lambeth resolution: first the unambiguous call to listening and dialogue, pastoral care for our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, and the condemnation of homophobia. And, second Lambeth 1998 advised against the legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions and ordaining those in such unions. Very *few* provinces are living into the fullness of Lambeth 1:10. The bishops of Church of England tried hard to maintain this balance, in their reported that was not passed last week at the General Synod.

In January 2016, the Primates were well aware of all of the perspectives on homosexuality in the Anglican Communion. No one tried to change anyone’s mind; rather, the primates tried to understand one another, and to appreciate their very different contexts. And I think that they did this well. So what were they to do? For the primates who uphold the traditional view of marriage, there was a genuine appreciation of the cultural and political contexts of the primates from the minority of provincial churches that support the marriage of blessed unions of same-gendered people. And those primates from the more liberal parts of the world similarly were able to appreciate the contexts of the majority of Anglican churches for whom openness to homosexuality is deeply problematic. There was a moment at that meeting, when for the sake of supporting mission in the different parts of the the world, the Primates saw only one way forward: to walk apart, and to go our own ways, to become two or three smaller and separate regional communions of Anglican churches.

When Archbishop Justin put this option to the primates directly for a vote, a miracle happened: they *unanimously* decided to walk together, not apart. In the power of the ever-surprising Holy Spirit, they bore witness to a costly unity grounded in their agreement with one another, but in a communion grounded in the Crucified and Risen Christ. Anglicans use the very Anglo-Saxon sounding expression, “bonds of affection”. As an African, I ask why we do not use the simple word LOVE? The churches of the Anglican Communion in clumsy and imperfect ways LOVE each other in the Lord!

So what did the Primates achieve? They met; in itself, this was a significant achievement. They prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and that was given to them. The Anglican Communion is fragile, but intact. The primates asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to establish a task group to continue the conversation about how to maintain this restored relationship, especially in other ways in which Anglicans will disagree on issues such a lay presidency, support for the criminalisation of homosexuality, collusion in corruption, beginning and ending of life issues, and other potential areas that make it difficult to walk together. The Task Group now exists, and will have its second meeting after Easter this year.

I continue to rejoice daily that the primates chose to walk together, because they bore witness to their faith that what binds them together—what binds us as Anglican Christians—is not agreement, even on important issues, but the presence of Jesus in the power of the Spirit among us. This is what makes us a Communion. Costly communion is a witness to the One through whom God was pleased to reconcile all things by making peace through the blood of his cross” (Col 1.20). And so the last thing the primates did in their communiqué was to commit themselves “through evangelism to proclaim the person and work of Jesus Christ, unceasingly and authentically, inviting all to embrace the beauty and joy of the Gospel”.

The primates will gather in a more formal way as an Instrument of Communion in Canterbury this coming October. This is a very positive signal about the health of global Anglicanism.

*Anglican Consultative Council—ACC-16*

Most unusually, eleven weeks after the gathering of the Primates there was the gathering of a second global Instrument of Communion, the Anglican Consultative Council last April in Lusaka, Zambia. It met under the theme of ‘Intentional Discipleship’.

In Lusaka Anglican bishops, clergy and lay people encountered the vibrant life and mission of the Church of the Province of Central Africa. Its particular witness to the Gospel of Christ inspired us. We are all inspired by the Spirit-filled worship of that part of the Communion.

We came together as a Communion of churches to strengthened by common prayer and common study of the Bible every day. The Spirit strengthened us in the powerful daily celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, and most wondrously in the extraordinary Sunday celebration of the Eucharist with the Archbishop of Canterbury as preacher and presider. . That service took *only* 4.5 hours! (The Orthodox representative later said that after that service, Anglicans could no longer complain about the length of Orthodox services!

That gathering of Anglicans from around the world expressed in a particular way Jesus’ command to love one another as he loves us. It was an experience of communion in unity and diversity, great difference and of course disagreement. But by the palpable love they had for one another, meeting as they did in the Third and Fourth weeks of Easter, it was clear that they—that *we*—are his disciples.

The lasting impression I took away with me from Lusaka was an experience of love for one another in a community in unity and diversity. I was converted by it. I experienced the Risen Christ in the midst of his people in ways that I had not encountered in quite the same way before.

A meeting of an ACC is also a time of serious deliberation. After public presentations and debate, ACC-16 passed 45 resolutions. They ranged in content from mission and discipleship, to the place of women and men in the church, to ecumenical engagement with other Christian World Communions, and engagement and civil society, especially the United Nations’ organisations. ACC-16 passed resolutions on inter faith relationships, the environment, safeguarding and safe church. There were expressions of solidarity with churches undergoing persecution and suffering. For me, the 45 resolutions were part of the same Spirit-filled events around prayer and Bible study, reflect an Anglican Communion that is robust, responsible and vigorous in its discipleship and mission.

For me, ACC-16 as a whole is another sign of the health and vitality of global Anglicanism. It will reconvene in 2019.

*Lambeth Conference*

As many of you will know, Archbishop Justin has announced the next meeting of the Lambeth Conference in 2020. We are just at the early stages of starting the plan for the 2020 Lambeth, so there is not much to say at this point. I can say that it will reflect the three priorities that Archbishop Justin has set for his archiepiscopate: prayer, reconciliation, evangelism and mission in addition to what will come from the various Provinces of the Communion. As such, it will celebrate in particular ways the centenary for the 1920 Lambeth Conference, especially its *Appeal to All Christian People* that gave a unique direction to the modern search for the reconciliation of the churches, the call to Christian unity. That Archbishop Justin has discerned that the time is right to gather the bishops of the Communion together in a Lambeth Conference is a significant sign of the health of global Anglicanism.

*Intentional Discipleship*

It is part of my job as Secretary General to identify and support the workings of the Holy Spirit in the Instruments of Communion. But there is so much to share about what is happening in local dioceses and parishes around the world. What I have seen in my travels throughout the Anglican Communion is the Gospel being proclaimed by church after church, in nation after nation; and the Gospel is being received in faith. And in that faith, witness is being given to Christ’s life and power. The Body of Christ is growing—albeit unevenly. There is much effective evangelism, mission and discipleship. The Scriptures are being translated and read. Schools are being built and children taught to find a path to a steadier life in this now topsy-turvy global system of not-very-benign economics and politics.

In many places communities are being strengthened in common purpose and action by Christian leaders – in agriculture, health, training, political witness. The churches in many divided and conflicted regions are proving to be sources of reconciliation —sometimes the only ones, —as we see in such inspiring ways in Burundi and South Sudan. Anglicans work with other Christians—in Africa, in Asia and elsewhere—with an openness and cooperative spirit; they reach out to people of other religions while rooted in their own Christian tradition.

In the midst of all of these things, the churches around the Anglican Communion are working together. In The Gambia, a mostly Muslim country, Canadian Anglicans from Wycliffe College, Toronto, are working with American and Korean Anglicans – and, of course, with the Gambians themselves! Together they have founded the first ever-Christian studies program at a Gambian university. In East Asia, Anglicans from Singapore are giving a lead primary evangelism, teaching, and community building in Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, and are working with Chinese Christians. They are joined by members of the Churches of North and South India in this mission work. In Haiti, the local Anglican and other churches are working side by side with members of The Episcopal Church.

The second area is the many companion diocesan relationships that criss-cross the Anglican Communion, in such wonderful ways that are not always reflected in provincial relationships. Many Irish dioceses have long-standing links around the world, and have learned that blessing and enrichment flow in both directions where true companionship is developed. The websites of the Irish diocese are a little uneven as they describe their companionship diocese-relationships. I would not the following ones that I found in a quick web search:

* Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe has links with the Diocese of Saldahna Bay, South Africa, and with the Diocese of Swaziland
* The Diocese of Down and Dromore has links with the Diocese of Albany (TEC), the Diocese of Maridi, South Sudan, and with the Diocese of Northern Argentina
* The Diocese of Connor has a link with the Diocese of Yei, South Sudan
* The diocese of Clogher also has a link with the Diocese of Kaduna, Nigeria.

These partnerships give tangible expression to what it means to be a communion of churches. It is a great joy and surprise to see the extent of such diocesan cooperation, which flourishes even when the provinces to which the two dioceses belong may be divided by serious disagreement on issues of human sexuality

Finally, we cannot forget that Anglicans, together with sister and brother Christians in many places, are persecuted for their faith to the point of martyrdom. They bear costly witness to Christ in the midst of horrendous violence, and are willing to speak the very name of Jesus in the face of murderous hostility.

*The Five Marks of Mission*

I could go on with many other examples of Anglicans from around the world engaging in the mission of the Church.One of the things that they all have in common is that they live out the Five Marks of Mission

* to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom;
* to teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
* to respond to human need by loving service, to transform unjust structures of society;
* to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation;
* to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

These Five Marks of Mission continue to inform the churches of the Anglican Communion and the programmatic work of the Anglican Communion Office in London, the overall direction of which is one of the joys of the Secretary General. I will just name a few:

1. The *Anglican Alliance* brings together Anglican expertise and capacity from around world to engage in relief, development and advocacy, often with global ecumenical partners and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Anglican Alliance coordinates work within the churches of the Anglican Communion in the areas of development, relief, and advocacy as a core part of the Church’s mission. Global priorities of the work at this time are 1) Supporting the empowerment of women and youth, including sustainable livelihoods and ending gender-based and sexual violence; 2) Working to end human trafficking/modern slavery, to raise the rights of migrants and refugees, and to support people affected by disasters and conflict; 3) Advocating for climate justice, sharing strategies to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change, to share skills on food security and to sustain the life of the earth.

2. The work of the department on *Women in Church and Society* engages in initiatives to end and prevent gender-based violence in all its forms. The Anglicans Communion is a globally recognised “mover and shaker” in seeking just relationships between women and men. Anglicans work ecumenically and inter-religiously on issues of gender justice with organizations such as the international Faith Movement for Gender Justice; the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, the 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women and Girls, an International Anglican Women’s Network regional consultation for the Anglican and United Churches in South Asia. The Communion supports Anglican advocacy and participation at the annual session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

3. The *Anglican Communion Representation at the United Nations* in both Geneva and New York enables better relationships and more effective communication between the provinces and dioceses of the Communion and their UN partners, especially as they respond to situations of human suffering. Staff members at both offices convey Anglican concerns to the UN and Governments while also keeping Anglicans informed about international initiatives. During the past few years the work has focussed on humanitarian response, questions of security, including food security, peace building and conflict transformation and dialogue across difference. Important aspects of this work have included developing institutional understanding (‘literacy’) of one another, for both UN institutions and the Anglican Communion, enabling communication from local to international level, building capacity for local religious communities as 'humanitarian first responders' and enabling the voice of their witness to be heard at the global table. This work is much assisted by collaboration with Roman Catholic and Lutheran colleagues.

4. *Anglicans are not alone: Ecumenical relations* There have been times when I think that the Anglican Communion has such troubles. But, compared to whom? When I became Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, I was automatically a member of something called the Conference of Secretaries of the Christian World Communions. They are all general secretaries or secretaries general, like me. In fact, they are my peer group. In my first meeting in 2015, I was astonished to hear that every single global church at this time is under considerable strain over issues of human sexuality, in one way or another: the ordination of women, the remarriage of divorced persons, and for so many of us, human sexuality. I was amazed to learn that Anglicans are not alone. I was even more amazed that in the challenges facing all global Christian traditions at this time, by comparison, the Anglican Communion is doing very well. Over the past 100 years, we have become one another’s friends and companions in mission, especially in the past 50 years of Anglican-Roman Catholic relations. While on the whole, we have not fully lived into the biblical vision of one faith, one baptism, one Lord, we are on the way as a communion of churches, with a series of healthy bilateral relationships with the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Conference, the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Anglicans around the world have relationships of full communion with Old Catholic and Lutheran Churches. The Church of Ireland is the first Anglican Church to have such a full communion relationship with a Methodist Church: you are leading the way!

And around the world, Anglicans participate in local, national and regional multilateral bodies, such as the Irish Council of Churches and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). The Anglican Communion supports the work of the Global Christian Forum. And most provincial churches of the Anglican Communion are members of the World Council of Churches. A sign of our ecclesial well being is our capacity to work along with other churches and communions, and indeed, to restore and recover our visible communion with other Christians in one faith and in one eucharstic fellowship.

5. *Anglicans are not alone:* *Inter-religious relations* To many people today, including many Anglicans, the most pressing areas in need of peace and reconciliation is with other world religions. This is where my own skills, passion and expertise lie, specifically in Christian-Muslim relations. I know people who did not know that the Josiah Idowu-Fearon known for Christian-Muslim dialogue, is also the same Josiah that is an Anglican archbishop and Secretary General of the Anglican Communion! With other Christian World Communions, Global Anglicanism is a leading player in interreligious dialogue. Last month I was at a meeting in Myanmar with an Anglican-Lutheran group engaging a group of Buddhists in Christian-Buddhist dialogue. Global Anglican has been well served by the Anglican Communion’s Network on Inter Faith Concerns NIFCON. The work is now so crucial that we are in the process of establishing regional Anglican Inter Faith networks, that will form the basis of an Anglican Communion-wide Interfaith Commission, staffed directly from Lambeth Palace.

*Conclusion*

So, back to the question which I have been given, which is “Global Anglicanism—Where are we now?”. At the close of this presentation, I am beginning to think this is not the right question. As I come to the end of this talk, I think I would have preferred, “Global Anglicanism—Where is the Spirit at work?”. My series of snap shots of life in the Anglican Communion suggest that in spite of our external and internal troubles, which are unquestionably serious and painful, we are still the Church. In a world so divided by difference and disagreement, we bear painful and costly witness to our experience that communion in Christ can contain disagreement so that it loses its power to divide. As such, only by the grace of God, the Anglican Communion fulfils a particular expression of the mission of God, to gather humanity and all creation into communion under the Lordship of Christ.

1. David Goodhew, *Growth and Decline in the Anglican Communion: 1980 to the Present*, Routledge Contemporary Ecclesiology (London/New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2017), 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, “The changing demographics of global Anglicanism, 1970-2010”, in David Goodhew, ed., *Growth and Decline in the Anglican Communion,* 51 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that *all* baptized, believing and faithful persons, *regardless of sexual orientation*, are full members of the Body of Christ; while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on *all our people* to minister pastorally and sensitively to *all* irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialisation and commercialization of sex; cannot advise the legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions; [↑](#footnote-ref-3)