

BISHOP'S LETTER

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you.

As many of you will now know, Tynwald has taken the next step to progress the Private Member's Bill that would remove the Bishop's vote in the Legislative Council. This is a significant development in our Island's life as a whole and touches deeply upon the heritage and identity of this Diocese. It is right that we acknowledge the weight of this moment and the range of feelings it may evoke among us.

I wish to say clearly that I am not disheartened, nor perturbed. Our confidence does not rest in constitutional arrangements, roles, or votes, but in the faithfulness of God who has guided His people through every age. The future of the Diocese is a matter for prayerful and thoughtful reflection and we should not shy away from those questions but we do so trusting in God's continuing call and purposes.

Throughout our Island's history, the Church has contributed profoundly to our cultural, spiritual, and communal life. We recall with joy how the translation of the Manx Bible helped preserve and nurture the Manx language when it was at risk of fading. Just one significant contribution of the Church to this nation. This remains unchanged.

We also look to the present and to our current vocation and service. Our churches today continue to serve as places of refuge, hope, and gathering. The recent installation of *The Moon* in the Cathedral at Peel opened our doors to thousands, inviting people of all backgrounds into wonder, reflection, and a renewed sense of the sacred. Earlier this year the significant work of the Cathedral's Big Table volunteers in serving members of the community was publicly recognised and celebrated. Across our parishes, clergy and lay people alike continue to share the good news of Jesus Christ, offer compassionate pastoral care, uphold community life, care for the vulnerable, support families, visit the lonely, and minister at life's thresholds from birth to death.

These contributions—and countless others—arise not from a desire for influence or status, but from our calling to follow Christ in humility, service, and love. Whatever may come of discussions about the constitutional place of the Bishop, the mission of the Church remains unchanged. We are here to proclaim the Kingdom of God, to seek justice, to embody mercy, and to share hope.

In this moment, I also ask you to hold our legislators in your prayers. They shoulder weighty responsibilities and must make decisions that affect the life of our whole Island. May God grant them wisdom, clarity of thought, and a spirit of generosity as they serve the people of this Island nation.

We stand now where generations before us have stood, firm on the foundation of faith which is though tried is found to be firm. The keeills which still grace our landscape testify to a faith that endured in simplicity, trust and perseverance. The same God who sustained the saints of old sustains us today. *Christ is our rock and our salvation; we shall not be shaken.*

Let us therefore respond to these present circumstances with grace, confidence, and steadfast hope, continuing to pray even now for the outworking of this current process. Let us also determine to remain faithful in prayer, worship and love for the flourishing of our Island and its people. I remain committed to serving this Diocese and to walking this path with you, in faith and trust.

Yours,

+Tricia

Rt Revd Patricia Hillas

Bishop of Sodor and Man

A Prayer

Lord God,
Grant us wisdom, patience, and hope in your good purposes.
Root our hearts in your faithfulness,
Guide our steps in your peace,
Strengthen us to bear witness to your love,
And bless our legislators with discernment, compassion, and integrity,
That Christ may be known, honoured, and glorified in this Island we cherish.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.