

I will continue to summarise some of the Synod proceedings. I encourage you also to have a look at the detail of some of these in the upcoming TMA, which will come out next week, and will focus on the Synod proceedings.

It may surprise you to learn that one of the motions that ignited much debate was a bill brought from the floor of Synod (as opposed to legislation brought through Archbishop in Council, as is usually the case) to repeal the age qualification for election. Currently any members of Synod and its elected committees must be less than 72 years old, in order to be eligible. This has implications for some parishes who do not have any parishioners willing to stand as Synod representatives who meet this criteria. It also means a mandatory retirement for people who still have much to offer the work of a committee. There was a lot of support for the motion, although it was recognised that there may need to be further restrictions brought, perhaps similar to the sabbatical period introduced for Parish Council members recently. There was a vocal minority, however, who did not want the legislation passed at all, highlighting the need for young people to take over. This view did not reflect some parish's reality, however, and the bill passed eventually.

A motion was brought asking the Archbishop and the Diocesan Registry office to reconsider the ways in which it communicated with the rest of the church. There was a sense that this could be done better, especially in regard to electronic communication of important issues, which is currently sporadic in its nature. When I outline the Diocesan Strategic Directions next week you will see that this is a key part of the intended strategy.

There were a number of motions debated which fall into a category which I consider to be "well-meaning but ultimately pointless" – this may be harsh, I accept! However, when the motion is to petition a foreign government for the release of a person they have imprisoned, I wonder how much weight such requests would have. And whilst very few people would want to argue against the importance of environmental issues, when a motion is simply calling on parishes to "think about initiatives which would minimise their impact on the environment" again I question their authority and likely outcome.

Finally, for this week's summary, there was a motion thanking God for the 10 year ministry of Dr. Freier, who was Installed as Archbishop of Melbourne in November, 2006. The motion offered congratulations to him on reaching this milestone, and urged Synod and parishes of the Diocese to continue to uphold him in prayer.

May Leo of Rome, Charles Simeon, Martin, and all the Saints walk with you this week...

*Sam*