

The Bishop's Synod Charge 2009

The Rt Rev'd Gregory E Thompson

Welcome to the thirtieth synod of the Diocese of the Northern Territory. I acknowledge the traditional custodians, the Larrakia people on whose land we meet in order to give thanks for God's faithfulness to us, to hear the stories and concerns on our hearts and minds and to seek to serve Christ with our best energies and insight for our Diocese and for the people of the Northern Territory.

A Cord of Grace, Goodwill and Common Purpose

When I travel this Diocese of over 1.3 million square kilometres, featuring desert, coastal, billabong, urban, outstation and agency communities, I wonder at the unique gifting of the landscape, cultures and the people that are within our Diocesan community. With such breadth and beauty comes extraordinary opportunity in our mission as Christ's people but also these qualities bring significant tensions of holding our life together in its diversity and distance. I imagine often our church and community life like a string of pearls or precious gems from the Arafura Sea to the Simpson Desert – each pearl or gem unique but each one reliant on a cord of grace, goodwill and common purpose. Without the cord running through our different communities we are isolated and vulnerable before the social and spiritual challenges before us. Without a shared sense of direction under the good purposes of God, our contribution to God's mission is unsustainable, for the weak give up without help and the strong in their own independence are not able to receive the necessary gifts from others.

A Shared Vision and a Clear Mission

Not only do we need a shared vision and a clear mission so that we support one another in the good and the tough times - knowing when 'one suffers all suffer, one rejoices all rejoice' – we need values of the kingdom that inform the way we live as God's people. They are often the unstated qualities and graces that give character to our commitments and relationships, identify us as part of the Anglican heritage and that reflect Christ in our midst, bearing witness like a light shining in darkness. This weekend after 18 months of drafting, commenting, meeting and workshoping we have a final statement for a Diocesan Strategic Plan that describes the cord running through the unique identity and grace of our communities. This statement, discussed tomorrow, attempts to hold together our identity in diverse contexts, our hopes with many local dreams and our shared commitment with many distinct local ministries. It places before us an ongoing conversation of where we place our resources and ministries for the years ahead because we cannot do everything. It does not seek to be the 'magna carta' or to be a new creed. It offers a template for each parish, agency, ministry to see their mission and identity interconnected with the whole while working at common priorities for a healthy church and an effective mission. It offers a fresh beginning for each of us to honour our relationships across this Diocese, support the weak, focus on the movement of the Spirit and be faithful stewards of all the gifts God has given us for service to the church and the wider community.

But a strategic plan remains simply a document if there is no prayer, no passion and no openness to the fresh expressions of grace. This plan looks to leadership in finding a way forward in each ministry context even if the problems appear intractable and the means limited to support solutions. Such leadership is personal and corporate, local and diocesan – each member prepared to consider what it means to be a disciple, each church leader remembering what it means to serve for the good of the body.

Leadership of Christ as clearing the way

Let us consider Christ's leadership especially as presented to us in the letter to the Hebrews. Hebrews 10.19—25: 'Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the most holy place, by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience, and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold, unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together (as some are in the habit of doing) but let us encourage one another all the more as you see the day approaching.'

Jesus has opened a new way for us into a place where we ourselves cannot go. It is on the altar at the centre of the Temple and it is at the same time the Cross where Jesus brings reconciliation between God and the world. Jesus is our leader, because he goes before us to clear the way. He makes a new and living way through the curtain, the veil of his body. We enter into his body, the fellowship of Christians and in him we pass into the holy place.

So leadership in this central shaping action is not about giving commands, or even about making decisions, it is about leading, clearing the way, making it possible for us to go where otherwise we could not. It is clearing the way to the Cross to relationship with the Father that I wish to offer you as the image of Christ's leadership. The only way then for Christians to lead is by following - following Jesus' way.

Leadership is about discerning the way

Our leadership then in the mission of God through his Church depends on discerning that way. We need to have the skill, the insight and the freedom to see where the new and living way opens up, where Jesus goes before us. Here is an important reminder that our mission is not 'taking Jesus where he is not already' rather 'going where he has cleared the way'. Where we have to go is where Jesus has led and that is leadership in mission.

We follow Jesus into the presence of the Father, into the holy place, through the Cross. We ask for the Spirit's discernment, to show us in our daily life and ministry, where that path opens up before us, to this or that person, to this or that new situation, in this or that new method.

In Hebrews, the picture put before us is one of a group of Christians whose life together is about reminding one another of what God has made possible. The binding reality is not anxiety, it is hope – that there is a way and as we seek to minister together, to exercise our leadership in Synod together, that must be part of what we continue to say to one another - 'God opens a new and living way in Jesus'.

A new way that involves us in walking the way of the Cross, that involves us in risk and uncertainties, but which we can confidently say to one another and to the world around, that God has opened up for us a way in the very heart of our powerlessness. If there really is one royal road, the final reconciliation to the Father's heart, the road that is in Jesus. As leaders we must discern that path in the Northern Territory and follow Christ who has gone ahead clearing the way.

Fresh Expressions

In the 40th year of the Diocese, 20-22 June 2008 will long be remembered as a watershed and was very much part of clearing the way for mission thinking. Representatives from every parish and every diocesan organisation gathered over three days at Christ Church Cathedral and Kormilda College to

ask for God's guidance in setting future directions for the Anglican Church in the Northern Territory. With the Rev'd Stuart Robinson (now Bishop of Canberra Goulburn Diocese) as facilitator, participants prayed, worked and shared fellowship together as part of the process of finding a shared vision for the Diocese. Stuart shared stories of "Fresh Expressions" of church throughout Australia to encourage participants to think widely and creatively as they looked to the future while honouring the tradition of which we are a part. A 'fresh expression' is a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. It will come into being through principles of listening, service, incarnational mission and making disciples. It will have the potential to become a mature expression of the church shaped by the gospel for its cultural context.

We considered that to be a 'Mission Shaped Church' we need to try new things, listen to the world outside our walls and at times be prepared to fail. A highlight of the conference was hearing stories from across the Diocese of the life and vitality already experienced in parishes and organisations. The conference concluded with over 200 people gathering for a Diocesan celebration of Holy Communion at Kormilda College. From an archipelago of scattered islands of faith communities, people came together as 'one mob different country' in the Northern Territory. We were sent out, challenged to proclaim the Gospel in new and exciting ways, so that God's kingdom would continue to take root in this place.

Great Journeys

The beginnings of great journeys are often unrecognised by others and where risks and uncertainties are experienced. They often start in the prayers and courage of the heart as people clear the way for God to work through them.

Last year I travelled with Rev'd Canon Gumbuli Wurramurra to his traditional land in the Gulf of Carpentaria on Bickerton Is. I saw the places where the Macassan visitors journeyed by boat each year for over many centuries to fish, trade and live for a time with Bickerton people. Their tamarind trees and graves are still there.

On reflection what is remarkable is the capacity of Gumbuli, other church leaders and his community to be traditional – grounded in place, language and land - and yet to welcome visitors, ancient and new to their communities. This is particularly so when Arnhemland peoples have suffered atrocities at the hands of others in the 19th and early 20th century. As a person of faith Gumbuli has made an extraordinary journey to minister at Ngukurr on the Roper River (for over 30 years as a priest). Last year was the 100 year anniversary of this community which provided sanctuary, the scriptures, the message of new life in Christ and of the great gifts that are in the people of this community. The celebrations I attended show how much the church in this Diocese is part of the landscape of Indigenous life and how critical the ongoing ministry is in remote communities.

Someone close to him has said that Gumbuli's greatest contribution has been through his preaching which has helped people overcome fear – fear of the unknown, fear of death, fear of what the powerful might do. We need leadership in our churches and agencies that while speaking the language of our place and time brings a strange compelling word as Jesus did in his day that addresses our fears and helps us to see how we can relate to one another, and enables us to see that we can step forward together.

Leadership brings a 'strange word'

We need leadership that brings a 'strange word' because the eighth deadly sin in the church is inertia - the incapacity to act faithfully in the moment we find ourselves because we are fearful

about that which may be asked of us– to transcend our loyalties and participate in the movement of the Spirit which is bigger than our personal preferences. We each need to see our faith as part of a quest to participate in rather than a territory to master or a tribe to protect.

We need people like our deacon at Umbakumba who passed away last January 2008 who knew how to follow Jesus and clear the way for God to work in peoples' hearts. She was born in 1943 and baptised 1960 when 17 years old, and was regarded as a foundation member of St Mary's Church Umbakumba. She became part of the original translation team that worked on the mini bible in Anindilywka and was the last one from that team to pass away. She was among the first Aboriginal women to study alongside men at Nungalinga College, doing the Certificate of Theology. Her bold witness and example brought her to the role of deacon, being ordained on Pentecost Sunday in 2006. Like many Aboriginal Christians, our deacon lived a faithful journey bearing an allegiance to Christ which transcended the barriers she faced and the poverty and violence of her community. We need to give thanks to such faithful leadership in our church.

And we need such leaders in our churches, lay and ordained, who are prepared to follow the pioneer Jesus with a faith that gathers around Christ not just our causes.

As the writer to the Hebrews described the first followers as 'strangers and exiles' (Heb 11:13b) you are both a friend and stranger in the environment you find yourself in. For a church leader one must know the local language and culture. Yet he or she must also speak a strange word, a word from beyond, a word from God. This arises out of what it means to be apostolic– someone sent and prepared to travel on the road alongside others. We must listen and speak being fully part of the people we are asked to lead and yet because we have also learnt God's language from God's word, we must speak Christ's word, that 'strange word' that disturbs the complacent and comforts the wounded.

Examples of Leadership

This Synod I wish to acknowledge the leadership also of Lay Canon Lance and Mrs Gwen Tremlett in our Diocese, who have lived that strange and compelling word of Christ 'follow me and I will make you fishers of people'. Serving continuously in remote communities for over five decades, they have embodied gracious service in word and action to support our brothers and sisters in Arnhemland and have now retired to a well deserved season on the Sunshine Coast. I wish also to remember the faithful service of Mrs Leila Hart who died this year. She along with Keith her husband, served in remote areas then came to Darwin supporting Indigenous people and living a hospitality and prayerful life on the royal road of Jesus. We need to remember such leadership because they cleared the way for others to follow Jesus and we minister on the ground that many others have opened up.

Appointments and Changes

Since the last Synod of June 2007, in pastoral leadership we have farewelled a number who have ministered alongside of us – ADF chaplains Rev'd Robert Paget, the Rev'd Michael O'Sullivan and Rev'd Sarah Gibson; others have stepped down from full time ministry – Fr Mike Nixon Dean of the Cathedral, and Rev'd Annette Bailey acting Chaplain at Kormilda College; others have moved to new roles with Rev'd Rob Haynes to Nungalinga College from Groote Eylandt, the new Dean Jeremy Greaves to the Cathedral from Katherine and Rev'd Steve Etherington as full time Diocesan Indigenous Advisor to the Bishop from Nungalinga College; and we have welcomed into the Diocese the Rev'd David Amery to Fred's Pass from the Diocese of Willochra, Rev'd Dianne Milligan to Palmerston from the Diocese of Tasmania, the Rev'd Bruce Chapman as Diocesan Youth Minister and at Nightcliff from Sydney Diocese, the Fr Alan Courtney to Katherine from Adelaide Diocese and the Rev'd David Burgess to Kormilda College as Anglican School Chaplain.

Partners in Mission

We have welcomed as Partners in Mission in Hospital Chaplaincy Ms Stephanie Daley-Smith at Alice Springs Hospital and Mr Morris Bastian at Darwin Hospital and Ms Narelle MacPherson as a BCA supported nurse at Kormilda College recently resigned. Other Mission Partners are Ms Kerry McLean initially at Nungalinya College and now at Groote Eylandt, Ms Ruth Brigden at Numbulwar both as CMS-A supported Community Workers. We also farewelled Ms Kim Eggleton as Community Worker supported by BCA in Alice Springs and welcomed Ms Gill Wright who has taken up this role.

Diocesan and Organisational Leadership

Also welcomed into the Diocese to assist in organisational leadership were Ms Coralie Nichols CEO of Anglicare NT and Rev'd Lee Levett-Olsen Nungalinya Principal. We farewelled Mr Ken Hodges of Anglicare NT and we recently farewelled Mr Malcolm Pritchard Principal of Kormilda College. Each of these agencies asks much of leadership and we extend our thanks to their contribution, service and partnership in the Diocese.

There have been extraordinary efforts made by the staff of the Diocesan Office. We farewelled Ms Deborah Leahy as Bishop's Secretary and welcomed Mrs Pat Jones as Executive Assistant. Along with Mr Michael Sparrow as Registrar and Rev'd Neil Forgie, Ministry Development Officer they provide the network of assistance and advice that this Diocese heavily relies on in order to support ministry in parishes and agencies.

Vocations in the Church

It has been much joy to ordain people for the vocation of ordained ministry. The Rev Michael Millar as Deacon at Minyerri, the Rev'd Phil Zamagias as Deacon for Palmerston now at St James Sanderson, the Rev'd Glennys Hannah as Deacon for Katherine, and the Rev'd Margaret Black as Priest for Fred's Pass.

Thank you to the Examining Chaplains who advise me in the discerning process for Postulants and Ordinands – Rev'd Neil Forgie, Rev'd Joy Sandefur, Rev'd Canon Bob George, Mrs Joy Brabham, and Ms Kate Mc Garry. The process of discernment of vocations to the ordained ministry is taken with great care both by the individual, the local church community and the diocesan officers entrusted with the responsibility of advising the Bishop.

In coming months to be made Deacon will be Mrs Nicole Anderson for the Cathedral (30 November), Mr Andrew Roberston and Mrs Carol Robertson at Ngukurr (21 September), Ms Lois Namarnyilk at Gunbulunya (17 August), and to be made priest will be the Rev'd Michael Millar at Minyerri (19 September), and Rev'd Yulki Nunggumajbarr at Numbulwar (20 September).

Missional Partnerships

I consider that over the last two years the Diocese has been blessed with the gifts of pastoral and ministry leadership. We could not do our mission as a Diocese without individuals prepared to come with families and serve in the NT or local people who are open to regular ministry often in honorary capacity. We also could not do the work of clearing the way through mission without partnerships with ABM, BCA, CMS, MU Australia, Bible Society, National Home Mission Fund and work beyond Sydney Diocese committee.

A number of important gatherings helped the Diocesan Council and assisted my endeavours to work at building effective missional partnerships with agencies and informed the Diocesan Strategic Plan. Diocesan staff have taken up the 2007 Synod resolution to respond to the NT Emergency Response -

'Intervention' - by supporting Indigenous church leaders. They have set a demanding agenda of bringing Indigenous leaders together at Nungalinga College for training, support and discussions, then following up with visits to our many communities. This 2-way learning has along with the many reports over the last 10 years informed a conference with workers with indigenous people in March 2008, and a meeting in February 2009 with heads of agencies who partner the Diocese through funding and personnel. The Diocesan Strategic Plan has been shaped by the priorities that have emerged from these forums.

The 2-way learning has assisted the Diocese, ministry staff, the Indigenous church leaders and the partner agencies as we have worked hard to listen to, describe and commit to a shared vision. A vision which takes seriously the environment of the NT Emergency Response, the requests of leaders, the experience of personnel, the history of mission agency support and seeks to bring together new partnerships within the Diocese and beyond it. I believe we have done this in prayer and good grace. One of the four strategic focuses is Indigenous Ministries with three goals- to strengthen local leadership of Indigenous churches; to develop new ministries to urban Indigenous people and to facilitate ministries which address social and economic needs of Indigenous communities. We have begun to clear the way in these areas for a new season of ministry by first building upon missional partnerships.

Ministry Planning

Missional partnerships have emerged to deliver focussed efforts. At a Diocesan level you will hear from the Rev'd Neil Forgie of the Ministry Resource Unit, the Rev'd Dr Joy Sandefur on remote training and support, the Rev'd Bruce Chapman on the Indigenous youth initiatives, the Rev'd Dr Steve Etherington on Translation and Resource priorities, and of the regional ministry approach which seek to bring tailored support along with new inter parish partnerships. The fruit of these strategies is already emerging with the ordination of candidates in remote communities, the development of accessible English resources, the emergence of youth gatherings, the licencing of two Indigenous Evangelists – Mr William and Mrs Marjorie Hall, the appointment of Ms Nicole Anderson as Diocesan Safe Ministry Officer, and the planning of Community Worker conference and Indigenous Churchleader workshops in Katherine.

At a parish and agency level and at an individual level I call upon this Synod to give leadership which 'clears the way' for ministry that offers new opportunity through partnerships, friendship, and prayer with the help of the Spirit. I encourage this Synod to nurture a fresh expression of generosity and grace by seeing our life connected with one another – where 'one suffers, all suffer, where one rejoices, all rejoice'.

Values and Practices of Ministry

The Indigenous Ministry focus and the other three strategic focuses of the plan – Ministering Communities, Resources-Education-Infrastructure, Missional Partnerships - all relate around values and practices that encourage sustainable mission. Discussions and feedback from parishes for the Vision Task Group of the Diocesan Council under the leadership of Ms Eileen Boocock which facilitated the 18 month process have shaped the list of values in the Strategic Plan.

Such values which frequently are assumed and unstated are a source of health for our church as we live them out in practices that shape our ministry. In particular the safe ministry practices that we have adopted at Synod as part of Faithfulness in Service need to be part of corporate memory and practice and not as an afterthought in ministry planning. With the appointment of an honorary safe ministry officer in each parish, I hope these caring ways will become intrinsic to our life.

A report on sexual abuse in the Anglican Church in Australia has recently been released which underlines our Diocesan decisions in recent years to train volunteers and workers and establish systems that monitor our work with children and young people. Researchers have compiled an Executive Summary from the **'Study of Reported Child Sexual Abuse in the Anglican Church'**;

"Child sexual abuse occurs in all parts of society. Organizations such as schools and youth clubs that work with children and young people are especially vulnerable. Churches, which have an extensive range of activities involving children and young people, are no exception.

At the 2004 General Synod the Anglican Church of Australia took a proactive approach to the issue of child protection and put in place a number of strategies to improve policies and practices concerning child protection around the country. As part of this effort, the Professional Standards Commission requested a report on the nature and extent of reported child sexual abuse by clergy and church workers, including volunteers, since 1990. The study excluded Church schools and children's homes. Professor Patrick Parkinson and Emeritus Professor Kim Oates, both from the University of Sydney, were asked to conduct this study with the help of research assistant, Amanda Jayakody.

The aims of this research study were to:

- understand the characteristics of accused persons and complainants and the circumstances of the offence.
- ascertain patterns of abuse in relation to similarities or differences in gender and age of the child complainants.
- inform the Church on what steps could be taken towards better prevention of sexual abuse within church communities.

The report analyses 191 alleged cases of child sexual abuse, reported from 17 dioceses throughout Australia between 1990 and 2008 to see what lessons can be learned to improve efforts at child protection. This represents most, but not all of the reported cases across Australia in that period.

The key findings were:

- Unlike the patterns of abuse in the general population, three quarters of complainants were male and most were between the ages of 10 to 15 at the time of abuse.
- Most accused persons were either clergy or were involved in some form of voluntary or paid youth work.
- There were 27 accused persons with more than 1 allegation in the sample. These 27 people accounted for 43% of all cases.
- Ongoing abuse lasting 3 years or more was significantly more common amongst male complainants.
- Most of the alleged abuse episodes occurred in the accused person's home or on church premises. Almost a quarter of the episodes of abuse of girls occurred in the girl's own home, compared with 7% of male cases.
- There were long delays in reporting offences to the church by the complainants, with an average delay of 23 years.
- Just over half of the cases were treated as substantiated by the church and a third as inconclusive, with erroneous allegations by child complainants being rare. The report concludes with various recommendations to the Church on improving its child protection strategies in the light of these findings, and in responding better to complaints of past abuse.

The researchers made eight recommendations which were recently endorsed by the General Synod Standing Committee. In particular,

Recommendation 1

Each Diocese and Church body undertaking youth work should introduce a system of selection and accreditation of people involved in youth work that complies with the *Model System for the Selection and Accreditation for Lay Parish Church Workers* approved by the Standing Committee as a resource in October 2006, if they have not already done so.

Recommendation 5

Each Diocese should review its safe ministry policies and structures to ensure that a person or persons other than a member of the clergy or their spouse are responsible for ensuring that *Faithfulness in Service* and other Diocesan protocols are enforced in each parish.

Recommendation 6

Each Diocese should ensure that there is adequate education of church workers concerning the risks of child sexual abuse in any organization that works with children and young people, and in particular, the risk of abuse of boys demonstrated by this study.

The Study and recommendations can be sourced through Mrs Nicole Anderson our Diocesan Safe Ministry Officer who has been recently appointed to facilitate communication and coordination around safe ministry practices alongside a safe ministry officer appointed in each parish. I thank MU Australia for their kind support of this work. The Safe Ministry Task Group of Diocesan Council under the leadership of Mrs Jean Packham has provided foundational work to the development of safe ministry practices in the Diocese.

The Opportunity of Welcome

The values in our Strategic Plan ought to be found in the ways we undertake ministry and welcome others into our life. Our Vision states that; 'We will be a welcoming community of Christ celebrating our faith, engaging creatively in renewing and growing our church and actively working for social and environmental justice for all.' Welcoming and inviting others into our life is central to being a healthy church particularly with so many who come to live in the Northern Territory.

'**Back to Church Sunday**' - **B2CS** is one important step towards engaging our wider community and helping people find a way to church and life in Christ. B2CS is based around a simple concept of helping people in our churches invite a friend to come along with them on a highly publicised Sunday. Now in its third year in Britain, it has brought 35,000 into regular worshipping life to churches. The Diocese of Brisbane attempted something similar this year with over a 1,000 new people in parishes.

On **Sunday 13 September 2009**, all the NZ Dioceses and 18 Australian Dioceses will be encouraging people to invite and welcome others into our life. Each participating Diocese has contributed to bring this to fruition. I have invited all Rectors to discuss this with their Parish Council and to signal their participation by appointing a local coordinator. Next Tuesday, Ms Deb Gould, the National Australia Trainer will be with clergy and church workers in giving a workshop. Those interested from parishes in this event are also welcome to attend on Tuesday morning at Nungalinga College.

The Values around healthy relationships

Every community and organisation needs to attend to simple but important practices that reflect how we regard one another. David Trickett, consultant in organisational and individual renewal, says we need to discern factors that are not transparent or highlighted but are crucial to the ethos and functioning of an organisation or individual. He describes this as attending to the penumbra in our

life. Penumbra is the area that is in partial shadow around what can be clearly seen. Penumbra discernment is about bringing critical and often unstated factors to light in a way that creates an environment where very different perspectives can be brought together and mediated. This comes about by people with diverse views committing themselves to personal practices of avoiding gossip, checking whether the information on issues is correct and working at keeping communication channels open.

St Paul focuses on the penumbra of the Ephesian church when he says; Eph 4:26-27 'Be angry, but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil.' The devil has been used to scare or to blame, but Paul indicates that our destructive choices allow evil to have a personal and abiding influence. The image of making room for the devil is that of giving a foothold, a step up for another. When we do not heed the principle of working at relationships with truth and peace in mind, then destructive forces occupy the community. The root meaning for demon in the Greek text is 'tear apart'. Evil's personal influence is to pull apart the reconciliation of Christ. It does not need an evil face, simply a hard heart.

Standing with the renewed Cyclone Tracey window in the Cathedral this evening, I understand that its symbolism conjures the winds that brought destruction, the colours communicate loss, and of the water depths of those who perished. Yet it signifies that through the chaos, hope and fresh beginnings erupt as they did in the years that followed that catastrophe in Darwin. Fresh beginnings in communities do not often happen in calm waters but through the challenge of serving and caring for others as the Spirit hovers over our chaos and need and brings about a new creation among us.

As I said earlier my charge to Synod is to offer leadership for the mission of our Diocese

'So leadership in this central shaping action (of Jesus) is not about giving commands, or even about making decisions, it is about leading, clearing the way, making it possible for us to go where otherwise we could not. It is clearing the way to the Cross to relationship with the Father that I wish to offer you as the image of Christ's leadership. The only way then for Christians to lead is by following - following Jesus' way. Our leadership then in the mission of God through his Church depends on discerning that way.'

In our Strategic Plan we have discerned that way as a Diocese by saying we are 'To live as the people of Christ through worship, caring for each other, sharing our faith, working for justice and engaging the wider community.'

May the cord of grace, goodwill and common purpose in Christ hold us together for the work ahead,

Rt Rev Gregory E Thompson

Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of the Northern Territory