

Fact Sheet No 279

ORGANISATION OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESES AND THEIR CLERGY

The following grew out of Rev'd Canon Nigel Coates' question and answer talk to the Guild on 10th October 2016

There are 42 Dioceses with diocesan bishops, including the 2 Archbishops of York and Canterbury, down from 43 with the recent amalgamation of Wakefield, Ripon and Bradford.

Canterbury, the Southern Province, has 27 dioceses plus Gibraltar and Europe. York, the Northern Province, has 12 including the diocese of Sodor and Man

A cathedral gets its name from the bishop's 'cathedra' which is his chair/throne from which he teaches with authority (hence the term ex-cathedra). Only diocesan bishops have a cathedra as the symbol of their position in their cathedral and diocese.

26 of these bishops, at present, have seats in the House of Lords but there are plans to reduce this number and include representatives of other faiths. The archbishops of Canterbury & York, the bishops of London, Durham and Winchester are automatically in the House of Lords, plus 21 others in order of seniority (from when they became a diocesan bishop). This rule has been 'tweaked' recently to allow the first woman bishop to sit in the House of Lords. They do have certain duties, eg prayers.

Suffragan bishops are assistants to a diocesan bishop, generally appointed with particular responsibilities. They may specialise in certain fields but they can also deputise for the diocesan bishop at certain services, eg confirmations, institutions and ordinations. In some dioceses the Diocesan ordains deacons and the Suffragan ordains priests.

Flying bishops are assistant bishops who have pastoral oversight of parishes and those clergy who do not recognise the ordination of women. For example they officiate at 'Forward in Faith' churches..

Particularly big dioceses, notably London and York, also have area bishops geographically subdividing the diocese. The Bishop of Fulham is a Suffragan of London.

Assistant bishops are usually retired bishops who still have a licence to officiate in the diocese in which they now live and may well assist the Diocesan with confirmations, institutions etc. Similarly other retired clergy often assist in the work of the diocese. For example, as retired bishops we have John Finney, Roy Williamson and Ronald Milner.

Wales has 1 archbishop and 6 dioceses.

Scotland (Episcopal Church) has 7 dioceses and a Primus is appointed from one of those bishops.

Ireland has 2 provinces: Armagh (7 dioceses) and Dublin (5 dioceses) - the Anglican Church in All-Ireland has always worked well together despite all the political disharmonies and unrest.

Archdeacons, Deans and Church Wardens

Under the bishops are archdeacons, responsible for legal matters, administration and a broad oversight of the parishes; like a trouble shooter for the bishop, dealing with buildings and admin. Southwell Diocese is divided into 2 archdeaconries, Nottingham and Newark

Dioceses are further subdivided into Deaneries led by Area Deans [previously called Rural Deans] - 9 in our diocese - with the area deans acting as chairman of their local synods. They assist the archdeacons in their ministry of oversight and their role is especially significant during interregnums.

Church wardens are elected at the Parishes' Annual Meeting by parishioners on the civil and ecclesiastical rolls. They are the bishop's officers in the parish, and are responsible for the good running of their parishes (in times past they also had responsibility for civil matters, eg the Poor Law, hence their part civil election).

Southwell Minster, Cathedral & Chapter

The word Minster is of Saxon origins and, until recently, reflected the role of a mother church as a regional centre for clergy serving local communities.

The Dean is in charge of the administration of the cathedral which explains why the Bishop, whilst he has his cathedra there which signifies his authority, knocks before entering on official occasions.

Cathedrals and their staff are supported nationally by the Church Commissioners. Southwell Minster is supported, with the stipends for the Dean and 2 Residentiary Canons. The titles of the 2 canons can vary – chancellor, educational, treasurer and missionary, are examples.

In our case, Nigel's title is Canon Pastor. As we are also a parish church, he has the responsibility for baptisms, weddings and funerals [the bishop carries out confirmations]. Nigel also carries an educational brief. This includes adults and responsibility for Diana Ives as educational officer for school visits and Time Travelling.

The other funded canon is the Canon Precentor who is responsible for worship and organises regular and special services.

Some cathedrals have a Canon Treasurer – but not us.

The headquarters of our diocese is Jubilee House whose staff are responsible for the management and administration of the diocese and its various activities including the stewardship of some 250 parishes and 300 clergy.

The Church Commissioners, based in London, represent the civil service of the church and have broad responsibilities for the overall secular running of the church, from clergy

payroll, to pensions, investments, grants and so on. Ultimately they control repairs and alterations to the fabric of the churches. Locally this is delegated to the Diocesan Advisory Committees.

At Southwell, we have a Fabric Advisory Committee consisting of an architect, archaeologist and other experts for advice re repairs and alterations. Major decisions must be authorised by the Cathedrals Fabric Committee.

The Chapter

Before Henry VIII's Reformation, the chapter was the local organising body of a monastery, cathedral or minster. The title arose from the early days when they would start the daily meeting by a reading of a chapter of the bible or a rule. Those appointed to the chapter would be the prebendaries, alternatively known as canons. The name, canon, derives from an ordained priest who followed the rule [canon] of the religious order, eg Benedictine.

Historically canons sometimes appointed a vicar choral to carry out their parish responsibilities.

The bishop now appoints canons to one of the old prebendary names. The title is honorary and usually rewards long or distinguished service. They are expected to act as good ambassadors and as 'critical friends', Lay canons also fulfil these roles..

The Cathedral Chapter is an executive body chaired by the Dean and consists of the residentiary canons and lay people appointed by the Bishop and Dean.

The College of Canons consists of the 16 honorary canons, both clerical and lay, which meets twice a year.

The Cathedral Council also meets twice a year and acts rather like the governing body of a school.

The canons still have their stalls in the choir and their seats in the chapter house. The latter are arranged in the order that each person has been a canon – so the one who has been a canon longest sits nearest to the Dean. The seats can be moved when one canon retires and a new one is appointed. The seats in the Chancel remain the same as the signs are fastened to the backs of the seats [their arrangement was set out in Fact Sheet 204-1 by John Toy].

The Canons' stalls in the choir are [alphabetically] - Beckingham, Dunham, Eaton, Halloughton, North Leverton, North Muskham, Normanton, Norwell Overhaul, Norwell Palishall, Norwell Tertia Pars, Oxton Prima Pars, Oxton Secunda Pars, Rampton, Retford, Sacrist, Woodborough. The 7 Lay Canons are named after the monastic houses in the diocese – Beauvale, Kelham, Lenton, Mattersey, Rufford, Thurgarton, Welbeck.

Attachment: FS No 280, extract from notes provided to Guides at York Minster

LEADERSHIP AND MINISTRY