



Address to the Election Synod on the Announcement of the new Archbishop of Sydney
May 6, 2021

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour. 9 For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.
1 Cor 3:5-9

I’d like to begin with a few words of thanks.

I’d like to thank Peter, Chris and Michael for their wholehearted devotion to serving the Lord Jesus and our Diocese and for their willingness to be nominated. The four of us have been able to pray together through this process, and on Tuesday night we dined with our wives together and finished the evening in prayer. I hold them all in high esteem and affection, as should we all. They’re men of God and faithful servants of the Lord and I’m delighted to have the privilege of serving alongside them.

I want to thank Bishop Lin for serving as President of this Election Synod. It’s a difficult and demanding job. Peter’s Presidential address was full of the strategic insight and passion for gospel mission that so characterises his ministry and for which we thank God.

And I want to thank you, the members of Synod for your generosity, your serious-mindedness and prayerfulness in undertaking this task. We sought the Lord and he uses this means - his own people in prayerful fellowship and discernment. We are very grateful for all those who made speeches for and against – it’s a challenging but essential part of the process - I know you will have done it in good faith for the good of the gospel as best you discerned it. I’m grateful for your dedication not just to this task but to the life of your local church and for the mission we share across the diocese in churches and schools and agencies.

35 years ago, the Lord brought me to the foot of his cross. There he washed me of sin and made me his own. There, he filled me with His Spirit and called me to his service. These are precious truths - but they are not rare. They are true of every Christian and I thank God for his work in all of you who call on the name of the Lord.

This Diocese has been blessed in extraordinary ways over a long period of time but one of its great strengths is the dedication of biblically informed, Spirit dependent, servant-hearted lay people who live out devotion to Jesus in their homes, churches, workplaces and communities, bearing patient and gracious witness to the Lordship of Jesus in your lives. What a marvel that is. The clergy equip the saints for this ministry and I am grateful to be one among them in this regular, ongoing work. This blesses the world and honours the Lord, and in our particular cultural moment creates the spaces and the opportunity for vulnerable, generous and purposeful conversation about the things of God and his gospel. As Peter Hayward said in his Pres Ad, you have elected an Archbishop for an important task, but be assured that it is in the impact of the gospel in your individual and corporate lives, that God is constantly at work.

Someone wrote to the four nominees earlier this week and reminded us that there is no higher dignity than to be called a child of God - born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will - but born of God through faith in Jesus. No greater dignity than to be called a Child of God.

Led by the Spirit of the Lord, you have bestowed on me a great responsibility. I feel a tremendous sense of privilege, and not a little daunted, to be called upon to serve the diocese in this way, as together we proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out darkness and into his wonderful light. May we, as the apostle Peter says, live such good lives among the gentiles that they may see our good works as a sweet adornment of the gospel we proclaim and join us in giving glory to God on the coming day of his visitation.

You have been prayerful these days and for many days in advance. Please don't stop. Pray for yourselves your families and your churches that we may live faithful and fruitful lives for the dear Lord who loved us and gave himself for us. Pray for your ministers and those who serve alongside them in your local area - for perseverance, encouragement and trust in God for the mission. Pray for our Diocese, the Bishops and Archdeacons, Standing Committee, for SDS; pray for our Schools - Heads, teachers, and Chaplains, for

Anglicare and our Agencies, their boards and staff and all who serve the Lord in the community. And I'd be grateful if you'd pray for me, and Cailey as we undertake this role.

When I became a rector for the first time, a faithful missionary who's now in his nineties gave me these verses to which I have so frequently turned in my ministry:

2 Cor 12:9

Christ said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

You have elected a weak servant, and you too, are but weak servants. But we have a mighty saviour - full of grace, sovereign, sufficient, supreme; having the supremacy in all things so that through him God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

If I can make a pledge to you, it is this - to stand at the foot of the cross, weak, dependent and forgiven, and from there to seek to serve, as he enables.

To Him, to the Lamb who was slain, be all power and wealth and wisdom and strength, and honour and glory and praise, forever and ever Amen.