

FROM THE BISHOP OF OXFORD
The Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft
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The Revd W O C Pearson-Gee
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07 December 2020

Dear Will

Many thanks for your message and for our conversation last week which I appreciated.

I've absolutely no hesitation in giving this assurance which is fundamental to the Living in Love and Faith process.

I would draw the attention of the DEF and the whole Diocese to the Appeal by the Bishops at the end of the main LLF book (page 420):

“Our strong hope is that people and communities all around the country...will engage with this book and its accompanying resources and, as far as possible, do this together with those who have different perspectives and lived experiences. This work demands from us that together we face our differences, divisions and disagreements honestly, humbly and compassionately, and that together we stand against homophobia, transphobia and all other unacceptable forms of behaviour, **including demeaning those whose views are different from our own**”.

The conversations which we plan to encourage across the Diocese will be conducted in this spirit and following the pastoral principles which frame the process. These principles are set out clearly on pages 4 and 5 of the book. As I indicated to you, we will write as Bishops in the New Year and set out our hopes for how churches across the Diocese might engage with LLF and the character of our debate.

Sadly as ODEF members will be aware, there is a particular vulnerability in this process for LGBTQI+ people, both those who hold to the traditional teaching of the church and those who want to see change and we will want, together, to be very mindful of this in the way that the debate is conducted.

As you will know we wrote to the whole diocese in 2018 emphasising the need for compassion, gentleness and respect on all sides in these debates and we will continue to commend these qualities across the Diocese of Oxford.

I have consulted the Bishops of Buckingham and Reading and the Bishop-designate of Dorchester about your letter and I write on behalf of us all.

With kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Oxford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Cc The Rt Revd Alan Wilson, Bishop of Buckingham
 The Rt Revd Olivia Graham, Bishop of Reading
 The Venerable Gavin Collins, Bishop-designate of Dorchester