Thanks to Penelope Middelboe and Mary Ring and all those who have organized this Synod. Groundbreaking!

We meet on the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre. Shocking – sobering to see such deadly intent. And today, the situation in Afghanistan reveals such a strong will to control, to dominate, to lay down the law in a way that many people will find oppressive. Such a contrast to Jesus who called us to freedom and who wanted us to know life in all its abundance.

Say a bit about my experience of being part of the move to ordain women in the Church of England. We know, as good as it is when women are included in the orders of the church, that is not everything: there are many other ways in which women – and men – are excluded and their influence denied or diminished.

Since 1989 – took on Established Church, Anglican tradition, the status quo

Monica Furlong: attempting to catch a minnow, caught a leviathan: a malaise about women deep within society

1918  Maude Royden – 1920 and 1930 Lambeth Conference
1935  Archbishop’s Commission – ‘theological’ findings
1944  24th January -Florence Li Tim-Oi
1986  Deacons in C of E
1992  General Synod votes for women’s ordination as priests (1994 ordinations)

(RC: we would have started with bishops! Authority flowing from bishop)
1993  Act of Synod – Flying Bishops (only Bishops and lawyers – not through synodical process)

2014  Women bishops – First consecration January 2015

   Nearly 30 women bishops – six or seven diocesans – rest suffragans
   Nearly 40% clergy women – many self-supporting ministers

Those opposed: traditionalist Anglo Catholics and Conservative Evangelicals, who are now focused on LGBTQI+ community

**What did I learn?**

**ASK:** who is benefitting from the status quo? The way things are now?

Present the **VISION**: don’t just be against something: present an alternative positive vision (Bristol Text!)

Start with **THEOLOGY**: give people tools to do their own theology Why might this be a positive and orthodox way forward? How is our vision more in keeping with the values and teaching of Christ?

As far as possible model the difference you want to see: be inclusive & collaborative

**FIND YOUR ALLIES:** at all levels, parishioners, priests and bishops

Understand the fear of change: why would some people cling onto the way things are?

**TWO groups:** Women and the Church (WATCH) broad based and multi-agenda and Group for Rescinding the Act of Synod) GRAS: single issue, outspoken (Uppity – mag)

So, work where you can with all allies. Allow each to work in their own way but communicate!
LETTERS, LUNCHES, LEAFLETS and LECTURES

Spokesperson and leaders take time to brief producers, editors and presenters. (100s of interviews on radio and TV, articles, press conferences)

Three centres of response: HEAD (Cogent arguments, history, examples), HEART (stories, anecdotes, painting the picture) and GUT (deep centre of what the person really feels) Ex: Bishop at GS

What is the Church? What is it for? Who is it for?

The miracle has happened: what does it look like?

Powerful questions: does God have a different relationship to women as women, to priests as priests? If so, nature of relationships?

Does God value males more than females? Clergy more than laity?

Does Holy Spirit give gifts based on sex? If not, on what?

Did Jesus treat men and women differently on basis of sex?

What would you attempt if you knew you could not fail?

Christina Rees 11th September 2021