

Saturday 23rd March



– it goes wrong. Sometimes badly wrong, A truthful prophet is one that encourages and nurtures flourishing communities.

A truly prophetic Moderator is called to be a pastor. I know through my own personal experience, as I'm sure many of you do already, just what a pastor Michael is. A prophetic Moderator will encourage healthy community, built on respect, transparency, and trust – and insist on a sound measure of good order as well.

I can assure you that Michael is very hot on good order – I think you'll find plenty of that, somehow! But good order and good governance is often the bedrock of good relationships, and good relationships the bedrock of good communities. Good communities are the bedrock of flourishing of all of us.

“That they may bear sons and daughters”. A true prophet is concerned with the place of children and young people at the very centre of God's people, and for the well-being and flourishing of the generations to come. Concerned, therefore, for the future of the planet that will be the home of those who come after us, a true prophet is concerned with the handing on of the faith to the next generation. All of that too, should be at the heart of the prophetic ministry of a Moderator.

“Multiply there, and do not decrease”. A true prophet is concerned with growth. And yes – I do mean numerical growth. Whilst being realistic about the situation the church finds itself in, a true prophet insists that growth is vital. To be alive is to be renewing constantly, is to be growing. We believe we have a profoundly precious gift in our knowledge of God and God's ways with the world in Christ. We believe it transforms individual lives and the lives of communities. We want others to share what we know and experience of the difference that makes – to share the hope that is within us.

A prophetic Moderator will challenge you to grow, to be intentional, and active about your plans to grow – just as I know Michael, and the good folk of Farnham, have challenged themselves with that vocation in recent years.

“Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile”. A true prophet does not rage against the enemy place that has become home. However foreign it feels, whatever terrible things the Babylonians had done to the Israelites – the were to seek their welfare. A true prophet turns the eyes of the community outwards from their own immediate concerns, such that they recognise that their own wellbeing is totally bound up with the wellbeing of others – because we are all interconnected and interdependent.

A prophetic Moderator will challenge you to lift your eyes to the world around (–)Tj 0.56 n (ow)]TJ 0 Tc 0 T

And so, we gather as Michael is inducted into this office. He is challenged by this text to be a true prophet in your midst