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I am very pleased to accept the office of Chairman of *Forward in Faith*, and grateful for the confidence shown in me by the many members of the Council, lay and ordained, who nominated me for the post.

From its inception, Forward in Faith has been clear about the need for the Church of England to ensure that those who cannot assent to the ordination of women as priests and bishops are able to look to a secure and lasting future. That aspiration remains at the heart of Forward in Faith's purposes. With the debate on the draft Measure on women bishops at a critical stage, Forward in Faith will continue to put the case for legislation which will offer just such a way ahead, not just for the sake of its own membership, but because that is what we believe to be right for the sake of whole of the Church of England.

Forward in Faith has become, however, much more than a single-issue campaigning organisation. In recent years it has grown into an organisation capable of promoting major initiatives in ministry among young people, vocations work, the publication of teaching, devotional and other material, ecumenism and many other areas besides. It is my hope that, in the next phase of its life, Forward in Faith will continue to be positive and creative in furthering the first two of its aims and objectives: those of *affirming* the Faith of the Church, and *proclaiming* that faith vigorously.

Forward in Faith stands for 'a vision for unity and truth.' Some members have found that vision fulfilled in the erection of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham within the Roman Catholic Church. I am glad that our organisation has made it clear that it wishes to support those who have joined the Ordinariate, and to retain the closest possible relations with them. For the overwhelming majority of our members, nevertheless, it is more important than ever that the Church of England retains within its life those who continue to be passionate about what Pope Benedict has recently re-affirmed to be the goal of the ARCIC process: full, visible, ecclesial communion between our two churches. This is the vision which Forward in Faith continues to share.

It goes without saying that in accepting this office, my responsibility to all who look to the Bishop of Ebbsfleet remains paramount, whether or not they are members of Forward in Faith, or indeed any other organisation. I do hope, however, that everyone who stands in the catholic tradition in the Church of England will recognise the important contribution which Forward in Faith has made, and I have no doubt will continue to make, to our common life. I am confident that I can exercise this new position of responsibility in a manner wholly consistent with episcopal office.

Finally, please be assured of my prayers for all members of Forward in Faith, that God may bring each one of us *to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*.

✠ Jonathan Ebbsfleet

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