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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we approach the first anniversary of those disgraceful scenes in York last July when members of the General Synod chose to ignore the clear advice of both archbishops and opted instead for provision for traditionalists to be made via a so-called 'code of practice', I thought that you would appreciate a brief outline of where we are.

I know only too well how isolated many of you are feeling and how frustrating it is to have to wait upon events which are outside our control. Last summer, there were those who argued that it was all over and that we had lost the battle to achieve suitable provision for those of us who cannot in conscience receive the ordination of women. Others – and I include myself in their number – took the view that we could not know our position until the synodical process was complete. You will know from the timetable we published both in *New Directions* and *Forward plus* that this process is long and tortuous. At present, the Women Bishops Revision Committee is meeting. It has received proposals from the Catholic Group in General Synod (working closely with Forward in Faith) for provision by means of additional Dioceses. Other sympathetic members of Synod have made various alternative proposals which might go some way to meet our needs. There is still all to play for. Given last July's vote we are bound to wonder whether any of these proposals will succeed but until this stage of the process is complete, we simply cannot know.

Back in early 1990s, we made it clear that what we needed then was alternative episcopal oversight. What we were given was only extended episcopal care – the Act of Synod – but we made it work. With the advent of women bishops, the Act of Synod can no longer suffice and we have said that forcefully over many years – in *Consecrated Women?*, in the pages of *New Directions* and *Forward plus* and at successive National Assemblies. Anything less than bishops with jurisdiction will not and cannot do.

But, understandably enough, some of you ask what Forward in Faith will have up its sleeve in the event that our synodical efforts fail. What, in other words, is 'Plan B'? And the answer is that 'Plan B' is 'Plan A'. Only bishops with jurisdiction will do. We cannot accept less. We remain determined that we shall have such bishops. To try and answer the big question 'How?' at this moment would be premature and, moreover, would damage the debate. Rest assured that your Council is committed to doing, and will do, everything within its power to meet that objective.

This whole debate takes place against the background of the break up of the Anglican Communion. A new Province is about to be launched in America and, only a few weeks ago, we witnessed the total failure of the Primates and Anglican Consultative Council to deliver the Anglican Communion Covenant which was promised at the Lambeth Conference.

But, despite this background, we know that the Faith remains true and that our commitment to the cause is solid. The 'vision for unity and truth' that undergirded our mission statement seventeen years ago remains as strong and single-minded now as it was then.

Every Blessing,

The Right Reverend John Broadhurst
Chairman