

## **Pastoral Letter to Philip North**

*This is pastoral letter of concern to Rt Revd Philip North from people of the Diocese of Sheffield, all are welcome to sign, though names will not be published, simply shared with Philip North.*

*The content is deliberately focussed on expressing pastoral concern rather than debating points of theology in detail.*

*You can sign it via a [Google Form](https://goo.gl/forms/TsHZGWErBNlhOZ43), [ <https://goo.gl/forms/TsHZGWErBNlhOZ43> ] which is protected and the names and addresses that are submitted will be sent, in confidence to Philip.*

*The logic in preparing such a letter is that those of us in Goole, Doncaster, Rotherham, Dinnington, Sheffield and elsewhere in the Diocese who are concerned are tending to talk to one another and senior staff of the Diocese. This provides opportunity to engage the nominee for the See of Sheffield directly, prior to the date of election on 25th April.*

### Pastoral Letter to Rt Revd Philip North

Dear Bishop Philip

We are writing to you as parishioners, lay-readers, church-workers, clergy, and those coming to serve the Diocese. We are publicly inviting people to sign this letter but we are not publishing names, since we are seeking to correspond with you.

We are writing to share the level of pastoral anxiety and distress that has arisen in the Diocese since the announcement of your nomination for election to the See. There will be points of church politics or theology that we are sure you will be hearing about via other correspondence. By writing this, we want simply to express from a pastoral perspective the concern and disappointment that has left us deeply troubled. We believe it is better that you know this is the case.

Our principal concern is, of course, your position as a traditionalist bishop coming to a Diocese that, despite having a number of traditionalist parishes, is mostly not of that persuasion. We know that you want the people of this Diocese to give you a chance to demonstrate how you intend to work fairly with us all. However, what we are asking for, prior to the confirmation of your election when you legally become bishop, is the opportunity to reflect and express our concerns, questions and worries about your nomination. You may not realise how many people share these anxieties, though you may have a sense of this from the correspondence you are receiving.

We want to assure you that we have no hesitancy about your heartfelt commitment to worship, spirituality, evangelism and social justice. These will

be an inspiration to our life as a Diocese. At the same time, there are aspects of “mutual flourishing” about which we are profoundly unhappy, given that a non-traditionalist majority in this Diocese will owe loyalty to a Bishop who comes from a traditionalist minority.

We believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ calls us into unity and justice. Therefore we need to understand how unity and justice are served by the nomination of a Bishop whose ecclesiology and eucharistic practice are not those of the majority in the Diocese of Sheffield. Even if, as we believe, you are committed to unity and justice as our Bishop, we do need to ask, for the sake of our mental and spiritual health, for the opportunity to understand how your episcopate would not prove divisive, but rather, would further these gospel values in the life of the church. So we would like to encourage you to meet with as many as you can of us who are concerned, prior to the confirmation of your election.

As we have said, our purpose in writing now is to make you aware of the breadth and depth of concern about the pastoral effect your nomination to the See is having on a wide range of people. We look forward to discussing these concerns with you face to face soon.

Yours sincerely, [the undersigned](#)

*The two public representatives for this letter are:  
Revd Ali Dorey, and Revd Dr Jeremy Clines,  
in case of any queries or questions.*