

National Conference of Priests of England & Wales Conference 2004

Motions Passed

1. This conference mandates Standing Committee to urge the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales to agree, publish and circulate guidelines on:
 - a. the procedures to be used when placing a priest on administrative leave;
 - b. the pastoral care of priests who have been required to take such leave.Proposed: John Smith (F8); Seconded: Kevin Pelham (S3)
PASSED: 98% for; 0% against; 2% abstentions

2. Given the changing role of priests, we propose that the standing committee be mandated to organise a study day in 2005 to explore different models of parochial re-organisation so that priests and parish communities can flourish amidst transition and change.
Proposed: Martin Sylvester (B6); Seconded: Peter Jenner (S6)
PASSED: 98% for; 2% against; 0% abstentions

3. This Conference asks the bishops to draw the attention of the relevant health authorities to the fact that the distinctive role of Catholic hospital chaplains, specifically in administering the sacraments to sick and dying Catholics, cannot be substituted by a general ecumenical Christian chaplaincy.
Proposed: Francis Marsden (F6); Seconded: Frank Gerrard (E8)
PASSED: 70% for; 21% against; 9% abstentions

4. This conference asks the Bishops' Conference and its agencies to make representation to the appropriate health authorities to resolve difficulties arising from a restrictive interpretation of the Data Protection Act, which is jeopardising the spiritual and sacramental care of many Catholic patients in NHS hospitals.
Proposed: Francis Marsden (F6); Seconded: Kevan Dorgan (F2)
FAILED TO BE ADOPTED AS CONFERENCE POLICY: 65.9% for; 27% against; 7% abstentions

5. This conference commits itself and its members to work zealously in the field of inter-racial and inter-faith dialogue.
Proposed: Don Bowdren (S14); Seconded: John Tavares (M3)
PASSED: 86% for; 0% against; 14% abstentions

6. The current crisis in priest numbers will inevitably mean the loss of regular Sunday Mass for many people. Many viable parishes have already lost their identity by the closure of Churches due to there being fewer priests. As one of several responses to the issues, we urge that the consideration of the ordination of married men remain actively on the Church's agenda.
Proposed: Peter Morgan (F5); Seconded: Brian Godden (B3)
FAILED TO BE ADOPTED AS CONFERENCE POLICY: 51% for; 27% against; 22% abstentions

7. This conference reiterates the proposal of last year's conference concerning the establishment of a therapeutic centre for priests (Motion no. 3 of 2003). In order to assist future planning we endorse and support the work being done by Fr. Paul Maddison and his team from East Anglia, including the proposal sending out of a questionnaire to priests. We do recommend, however, that the draft questionnaire be substantially revised.
Proposed: Brian McGinley (S7); Seconded: Alan Finley (C3)
PASSED: 96% for; 0% against; 4% abstentions

8. The National Conference of Priests supports the strategy of the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales in their negotiations with the drafters of parliamentary bills particularly in the defence of the sanctity of human life.
Proposed: David Elder (S11); Seconded: Victor Walter (E9)
PASSED: 93% for; 0% against; 7% abstentions