**Presidential Address from the Rt Revd Dr Chris Goldsmith, Bishop of St Germans and Acting Bishop of Truro**

**Truro Diocesan Synod**

**Saturday, September 29, 2018**

We have been blessed this morning as worship was led by the children of the Five Islands Academy and the Mounts Bay Academy.

Of course at this time of the year many children and young people are going to school, college and university and some are going for the first time and they do so with a mixture of excitement and nervousness.

They are all asking themselves: Am I ready?

And the question for us is: are we ready?

Am I ready?

Are we ready to work together as a new synod, understanding our separate communities but also seeing the larger picture God has for people in Cornwall?

Are we ready to serve, support and to love these people,

and are we ready to follow our new diocesan bishop?

Are we ready?

It was interesting to listen to the young people earlier, when they talked of change. One said: ‘change is good but it can be hard’. And that is where we are. We are in the change business - God’s kingdom is something living that grows and changes, and we are part of that. It will become bigger and more challenging, and our resources can often seem so small in comparison. Yet we do not face these challenges alone.

As I was thinking about what to say today, I found myself drawn to John Chapter 6. This was still at an early stage of Jesus’ ministry, full of excitement - thousands had been fed, crowds had flocked wherever he went, and people were beginning to call themselves disciples.

And at this point Jesus spells out who he is - not just a miracle worker but the Son of God. Following him was not just about receiving, but also about giving. It is a poignant passage, because many when they heard this felt that this teaching was too difficult for them to accept. Many disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. The great crowds began to shrink.

And then Jesus turned to those who were closest to him and asked the 12: ‘Do you also wish to go away?” And Peter answers for that group of 12, as so he often did: “Lord to whom can we go, you have words of eternal life, we have come to believe and know that you are the Son of God.”

And then Jesus answered them: “Did I not chose you, the 12?”

That is what it means to be ready. To recognise ourselves as being chosen by God, but also as being called to be part of what he is doing among us.

Our task together will be to discover what it means in practice to learn to love God more deeply, and to learn to love the people of Cornwall in every way.

That is what we have been chosen and been called to do. And we do so knowing that he, Jesus, has words of life … a life that begins now and goes on forever; words that speak of the love he has for all, giving all of himself, holding nothing back. That is what he asks of us as a synod and as disciples - to follow him and do as he has done to bring hope, and life, and new beginnings to the communities we are part of out of love for him and love for this world he made.

May we be ready together, may we find in one another the courage and confidence to rise to this and to be a deep rich blessing to Cornwall, as God’s church has been for generations.

May we bring that change, bring that hope, bring that life that only comes and flows from the words of Jesus Christ.

Amen.