



Gracy Vijaya Crane

Dear Elector,

I am not a conventional candidate, but perhaps this is not the time for conventional candidates!

After much prayer and reflection, I am standing as an ethnic minority woman to bring a fresh voice to the House of Laity.

I have a diverse background, both in Christian worship and in my professional career, and I can bring relevant experience from the worlds of scientific research and international government policy. On the most contentious issues, I will seek a consensual approach that honours Scripture and welcomes our multi-cultural nation to meet our Saviour.

Yours in Christ

Gracy

Dr. Gracy Vijaya Crane

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My background

I was born and raised in India in the Tamil-speaking community, so I'm trilingual in English, Tamil and Hindi. I moved to England in my early twenties to study at Kings College London, and have also spent some years living in Boston, USA. Having lived and worked in several countries, I am deeply interested in culturally diverse church life.

I am married to a white British husband Richard, and together we have a daughter (18) and a son (14). We both work as medical scientists in the biotechnology industry, although Richard is now on the discernment path to ordained ministry. My professional role involves negotiation with international governmental agencies, developing policies for the licensing of new medicines.

My faith journey

I was raised in a God-fearing Roman Catholic family, but moving to England prompted me to explore my own faith. In God's wonderful providence, I came to know Jesus Christ when a Sikh friend shared her story with me and took me to her charismatic church in south London. But always one to question things for myself, including cultural norms, I bought my first Bible from WH Smith and began to learn about my own identity in Christ. My search for a personal relationship with God came to a head early one morning, when I realised that whatever was to my profit, I now considered a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Him (Philippians 3:8). This simple truth has motivated me to serve Christ and share my faith ever since. I joined an Anglican church in Oxford, and have since worshipped in several traditions in England and America. Acknowledging the diversity of worship that I have experienced is important to me.

My Parish background

I have been blessed to engage in several different church traditions. This has given me a broad perspective on the role the Church plays in people's lives, and how the Church can bring diverse communities together under one God. Following my Catholic upbringing, I have served in a charismatic Anglican church (St. Aldate's Oxford) while studying for my PhD, and a large Congregational church in Boston USA while researching stem cell biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Most recently, I have served in various lay roles in a smaller Anglican church (St. Mary's Maidenhead). This has included advising the Vicar and PCC in addressing the contemporary pastoral issues of racial diversity and workplace injustice, leadership of mid-week home groups, participating in international Bible studies, leading intercessory prayer and gospel readings on a Sunday, and involving myself wholeheartedly in the life of the church.

My professional career

Having trained as a cancer research biologist, I currently work in the pharmaceutical industry as a health science policy advisor.

Day to day, I liaise with international governmental organisations and business colleagues around the world.

Given my own background, and the international environment in which I work, I am culturally empathetic and able to bring together multi-cultural viewpoints.

I am active in a global network focusing on implementation of better diversity and inclusion within my company. This has allowed me to understand better how large organisations can create a more inclusive and listening culture.

I also participate in an ecumenical network of Christians within the company, helping to bring faith to bear in the work environment, which has been especially challenging for many during the pandemic.

How I will contribute to the Synod

Like many other organisations in this country, the Church of England is not immune from accusations of institutional racism and cultural bias. By and large, our Synods do not reflect the cultural demographics of modern Britain, as was recently observed by the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce. In mission, the Church does not speak as powerfully to every ethnic group as it could.

As a member of a UK Minority Ethnic group (UKME), I am deeply interested and involved in matters of diversity within the Anglican church, recognising that the church is an anticipation of the "great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language", which will one day be gathered by the Lord (Revelation 7:9). With my personal experiences of being a Christian from a UKME background, my professional experiences in the international corporate world, and familiarity with engaging with government policies, I feel I am well placed to provide a strong voice to General Synod on this most sensitive and timely subject.

In addition to many other important issues, the next Synod will debate Living in Love and Faith. I am very aware of the contentious issues, and do not approach this with a dogmatic agenda. I commit to listening carefully and with sensitivity to the issues put forward, and I will favour the most consensual approach that both honours Scripture and welcomes all people to meet our Saviour.