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ST JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH  
DARLINGHURST

THE REVEREND DR BILL LAWTON

The Hon Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG

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I am shocked to my wightin to hear that Bill Lawton is retiring. I hope he is not going to become somebody distinguished and venerable like a Bishop or a Canon. He has far too much of the work of Jesus to do. And obviously there's still a lot of fight left in him.

Bill was at Fort Street High School before me and it is only when he came to St John's that I really got to know him. St John's is a special Church for my family. It is where my parents were married; where I was christened; and where my brother Donald was married ten years ago.

I have been to functions and seminars, as well as services, that Bill has organised. I admire the inclusive attitude he has adopted. What a contrast he is to so many in the Church. I wrote to him recently when I saw in the gay press reports of comments he had made underlining his attitude of inclusiveness - a Church for all and not one excluding gays, lesbians, drug users, sex workers and the poor. So far as I am concerned, Bill is a true example of

Christian leadership in the contemporary world. Anyone who reads the Gospel and reflects on the life of Jesus would have no doubt about the Church at which He would be worshipping if He were around Sydney in physical, and not just spiritual, form today.

The Anglican Church - indeed the Christian Churches and all Faiths - need more people like Bill Lawton. It needs fewer of the angry people in purple that we saw on the television at the recent Lambeth Conference. Bill goes into retirement from St John's with my admiration, respect and love.