

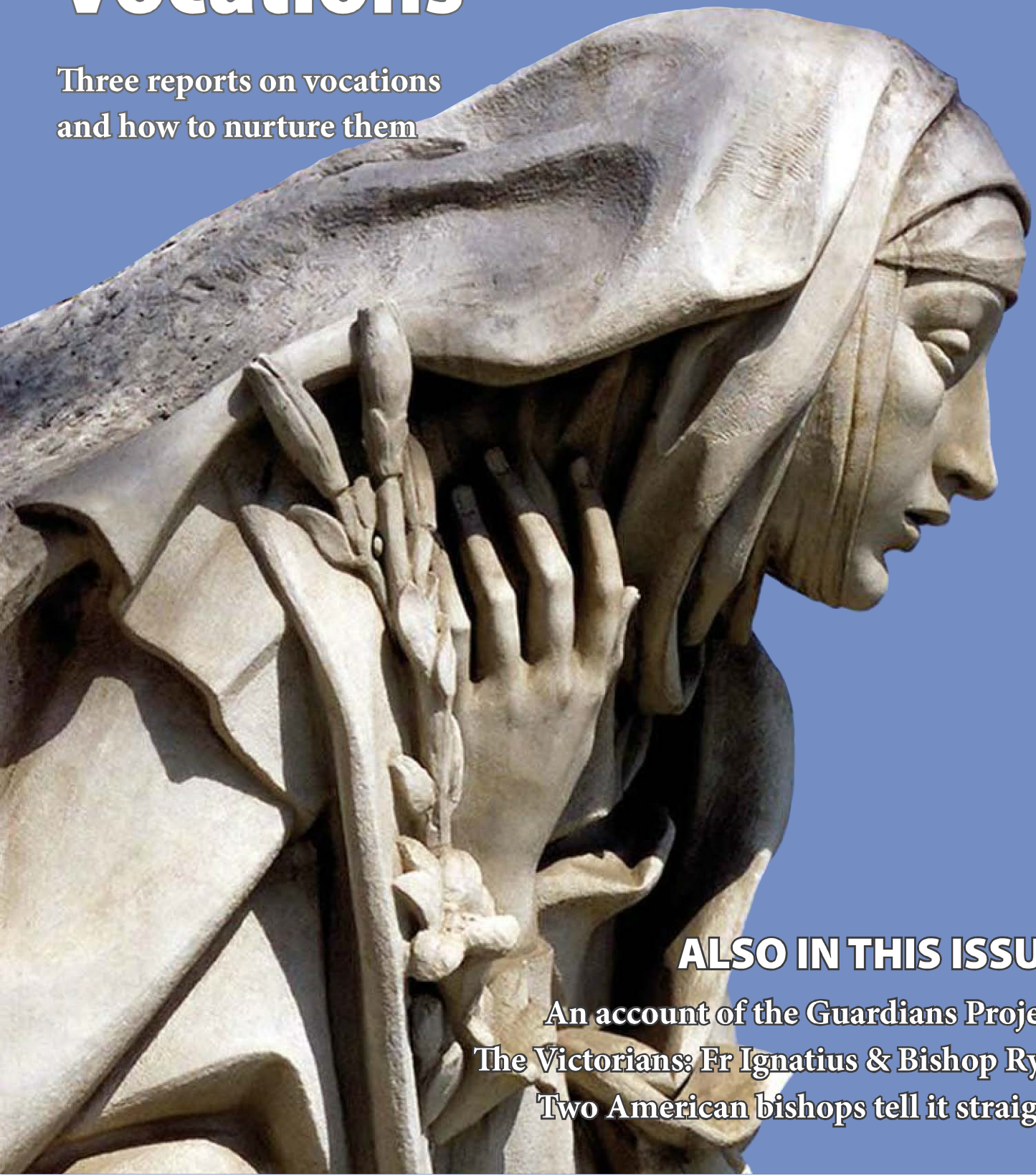
newdirections

April 2008
£2.50

serving Evangelicals and Catholics seeking to renew the Church in the historic faith

Vocations

Three reports on vocations
and how to nurture them



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

An account of the Guardians Project
The Victorians: Fr Ignatius & Bishop Ryle
Two American bishops tell it straight

REGULARS

6

GHOSTLY COUNSEL

ANDY HAWES on the second half of life

11

DEVOTIONAL

FR CRISPIN HARRISON CR on the fifty days of Easter

12

PATRICK REARDON

The identification of God and Being

12

SACRED VISION

ANTHONY SAVILLE on William Bouguereau

16

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

ARTHUR MIDDLETON on Henry Hammond

17

THE WAY WE LIVE NOW

GEOFFREY KIRK on TEC's Easter message

31

TOUCHING PLACE

SIMON COTTON on SS John and Mary Magdalene, Goldthorpe

30 DAYS	14
FiF UPDATE	30
LAST CHRONICLE	35
LETTERS	23
PEVs' DIARIES	35

CORRESPONDENTS

20 AMERICA 1

BISHOP ROBERT DUNCAN on why he has not 'abandoned communion'

20 AMERICA 2

BISHOP JACK IKER on ordination and its vows

22 EGYPT

BISHOP MOUNEER ANIS on the need to keep listening

REVIEWS

24 ART

Masterpieces from the Louvre at the Wallace Collection

24 BOOKS AND CDs

A Challenging Reform Rooted in Detachment
Blood and Rage
Worlds at War
'Ethos' and the Oxford Movement
Firmly I Believe

contents

Vol 11 No 152

April 2008

FEATURES

7

The Guardians Project

DAVID WALLER

describes the beginning of a project to inform key members of the laity about how to deal with an interregnum

8

Fighting for honour

PAUL GRIFFIN

aims to restore the concepts of honour and respectability to their proper place

8

Permitted things

FRANCIS GARDOM

pays his last visit to the flawed congregation at St Grizelda's

9

Lost Victorian monk

ALAN EDWARDS

reflects on the life and eccentricities of Fr Ignatius (1837–1908)

10

The small lay church

PHILIP NORTH

emphasizes the need for lay renewal and risk-taking in a final extract from the Evangelism Working Party report

11

Light bulbs

ALAN EDWARDS

on the off-setting of our environmental sins

13

Unity for mission

SISTER MARY MICHAEL CHC

on some lessons from John Charles Ryle, the first Bishop of Liverpool, who taught the importance of working together

4/5 LEAD STORY

Heeding the call

As Vocations Sunday draws near,

John Stather makes a plea for members of the Church to listen and respond to God's call

Call to a priesthood

Sarah Mowbray

recounts her journey from ordination as a woman priest to a rediscovery of the priesthood of all believers



15

Fostering vocations

ANN TURNER

outlines the FiF Working Party's proposals for a policy on vocations in a new province

18

Abortion limit

J. ALAN SMITH

considers the consequences of reducing the time limit for abortions

18

IX The Resurrection argument

GEOFFREY KIRK

on the significance of Christ's risen body in necessary continuity with his incarnate body

19

Intelligent Mr Slope

HUGH BATES

puts in a good word for a fictional nineteenth-century clergyman

29

Which way?

FRANCIS GARDOM

on a week of prayer for the victims of abortion

2a The Cloisters, Gordon Square
London WC1H 0AG

tel 020 7388 3588

fax 020 7387 3539

subscription email

nd.subs@forwardinfaith.com

editor

nd.editor@forwardinfaith.com

all other enquiries

nd@forwardinfaith.com

Editorial

Editor: Nicholas Turner

Deputy Editor:

Kathleen McCully

Assistant Editors:

Geoffrey Kirk, Jonathan Baker,

Simon Heans, Owen Higgs,

Thomas Seville CR,

William Davage, Len Black

Contributing Editors:

Andy Hawes, Francis Gardom,

Arthur Middleton, Gerry

O'Brien, John Richardson

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NEW DIRECTIONS is sent free of charge to all members of Forward in Faith. Individual copies are sold at £2.50.

All subscription enquiries should be addressed to FiF UK Office at the address above.

Subscription for one year: £25 (United Kingdom/EEC), £30 (Overseas).

Priests from Anglican Provinces in Third World countries and students in theological training in the Anglican Communion will receive a free subscription.

Advertising

Mike Silver

57 Century Road,
Rainham, Kent ME8 0BQ

tel 01634 401611

fax 01634 306368

email m.silver@breathe.com

Classified ads rates: £16 for one month (up to 50 words)

£32 for two months

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The next issue of **newdirections**
is published on 2 May

There is no denying that the medical research industry is a major part of the UK economy, and we are all the beneficiaries of the wealth it brings. Nevertheless, it would be wise to consider more carefully the nature and extent of those advantages, and whether they are not being won at too high a price.

Some of the research may result in medical benefits – new cures for old diseases – but this is not the principal motivation and purpose behind the Human Fertilization and Embryology Bill. Apart from ‘increasing the scope of legitimate embryo research activities’ (the official statement from the Office of the Leader of the House of Commons), it is also being put forward to ‘help maintain the UK’s position as a world leader in reproductive technologies and research’. All this is possible because of ‘technological advances and changes in public attitudes’.

The row over a free vote for Labour MPs may be resolved in time for the next parliamentary reading in May, but even if it is – and satisfactorily – we are left with the unsettling question as to why the Government felt it to be so important to dismiss the conscientious convictions of its Christian members.

Every Member of Parliament must look to his or her conscience when voting, and many parliamentary votes will be whipped. ‘So what’s so special about this case?’ commented one Minister dismissively. There was a three-line whip for the Iraq war, so why not for embryo research? What is so special is the intensely personal nature of the understanding of a human person.

It is obvious that governments, and the parties that make up governments, have a responsibility for many areas of life that affect the human person; but party politics has, in a tolerant country such as England, held back from intruding too far into individuals’ lives, for not everything is a party issue. Until now. It is a regrettable and foolish move.

It is a matter not so much of moral principle, as of appreciation – an appreciation that it is not the role of government to make *de facto* judgements about the nature of the human person, and then impose that understanding upon all who share its wider political aims. Many things are proper tasks for political parties; many propositions are proper subjects for a party manifesto; but the definitions of life and personhood are not.

If Christians are to be excluded from government, because they cannot in conscience subscribe to these new definitions of human life, then this country as a whole will be the

poorer for it. If men and women, guided by a rule of faith, have an appreciation of human worth that does not incorporate cross-species hybrids, even if they are wrong, their witness should neither be despised nor excluded, still less punished by exclusion from the realm of politics. The riches to be gained from maintaining ‘the UK’s position as a world leader in reproductive technologies and research’ are not worth this loss.



The relationship between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the press is proving something of a roller-coaster. After his lecture and radio comments on Shariah Law few, if any, journalists were prepared to defend him. He was almost universally attacked – as a ‘bearded leftie’ out of touch with public opinion.

But *The Daily Telegraph*, no less, recently applauded his Easter message, which condemned greed and aggressive affluence. It was, said a second leader, an example of precisely the moral and spiritual guidance which a churchman should be giving to the secular world of politics and business. The Archbishop was hailed as a man of intelligence and piety.

What are we to make of this volatility of opinion? It is surely proof, if proof were needed, that the place in our society of Christianity (and of the Church of England in particular) is fragile indeed. Most of us, Christians or otherwise, wish it were not; but know it to be so. The residual religion of Englishmen, it has been said, is that they are not Roman Catholics. This is rapidly changing.

It is not that Catholicism is becoming more acceptable, but that other Christians are becoming less so. ‘Britishness’, about which the Prime Minister is so concerned, is less and less likely to take seriously the religion from which it once derived its core values.

Small wonder, then, that the Archbishop is the whipping boy of every party, within and without the Church. There is no consensus from which he can speak, and no consensus to which he can speak. That is why Rowan – whether, at any particular point, you agree with him or not – is a person of major significance in our current dilemmas.

The Telegraph is right: his example of intelligence and piety is one that illuminates those dilemmas and renders all of us more able to face them with courage and honesty. In a world where politicians are increasingly regarded with a jaundiced cynicism he has a crucial role. **ND**



Heeding the call

John Stather makes a simple plea that members of the Church heed the call of God and consider the possibility of a vocation including for men a vocation to the ministerial priesthood

all
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of the
Church
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the
vineyard
of the
Lord

St Thérèse, as she entered the convent in Lisieux, said that all she wanted to accomplish was 'to save souls and pray for priests.' The World Day of Prayer for Vocations is celebrated on Sunday 13 April 2008, which has also been designated as Vocations Sunday by the Church of England.

There is a lot of talk from Ministry Division down about vocations. A phrase one often hears is 'praying for more vocations,' but I believe that this rather misses the point. God does not need reminding that he needs more priests for his Church. Rather what we are called to do is to pray that more of our young men, and also our older men, will respond to God's call. Vocations are there, have always been so in the past, and will be so in the future. Instead we need to focus our energy on praying for the recognition of the call.

In the First Book of Samuel, we hear of the call of the boy Samuel. Samuel hears a voice calling him, but he does not realize from whom it comes. Samuel speaks to Eli, and when he initially responds, Eli also fails to realize the source of the vocation. Only on the third occasion does he advise Samuel to reply to the voice, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening' [1 Sam. 3.9].

Listening, therefore, is the important element. Only through our reading of the Scriptures, participation in the Mass, and through prayer can we engage with and listen to God. It is through the conversation of prayer and study of his Word that we listen to God, and are moved to action by the Holy Spirit.

The Church of England has done a lot of work with regard to stewardship recently, and one of the most popular schemes at the moment is TRIO – The Responsibility Is Ours. This is also true for vocations work. We are all in it together, and have a responsibility to take vocations seriously.

It is certainly the responsibility of parish clergy to preach and teach about vocations, and to encourage those exploring their vocations. Parish priests know what is required of priests in today's church. In fact, they are often better qualified than a number of diocesan officials, who have sometimes lost touch with the day-to-day life of a parish, and the gifts and skills that are required. As any clergy who have attended Continuing Ministerial Education recently will sadly know, what really matters is Management Speak!

It is not easy to be a Catholic priest in the Church of England at this time of change and uncertainty. This is, however, nothing new! The heroes of the faith from the Oxford movement onwards have grappled with the challenge, and it is important that they have successors to continue their work. Priests are needed to serve the people of God and uphold the faith as we have received it.

Clergy should use the opportunity of Vocations

Sunday to join with Catholic Christians throughout the world in promoting vocations, and this means preaching, teaching and prayer. The Gospel appointed for Vocations Sunday is John 10.1–10, with lots of powerful imagery of sheep, sheepfolds and shepherds.

It is also the responsibility of the laity to pray and to seek out vocations and to talk to men whom they think may have the qualities needed to be priests. Be on the lookout in your own congregations: sow seeds and encourage those exploring their priestly vocations.

There will be a Vocations Conference held at St Stephen's House, Oxford, from Friday 5 to Sunday 7 September. If you think that either you may be interested in attending or know someone who would, please put the date in your diary now. These conferences, organized by the Catholic Societies Vocations Group, have proved invaluable to those who have attended, and they are intended for those at any stage in the discernment process. If you are just beginning to consider a vocation to priesthood, or if you have a Bishops' Advisory Panel coming up, do come along.

I attended one of the early conferences almost ten years ago in the early stages of discernment. It was very helpful to be able to meet others who were experiencing the same feelings and who had many of the same questions. In the exploration of one's vocation, it is useful to be able to spend time with those in the same boat, as well as spending time with a number of priests who have been in precisely that position themselves.

Our forefathers in the faith also took vocations to the religious life very seriously, but this is often overlooked today. We need to encourage such vocations in order to continue the valuable work of the many men and women who have chosen to live the Gospel in a radical way, professing the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. This may not be fashionable in today's world, but being a disciple of Christ is about being counter-cultural.

On Vocations Sunday, every member of the Church needs to consider and pray about what God may be calling them to do. All baptized members of the Church need to consider the part they can play in the vineyard of the Lord.

The example of Our Lady is a source of constant inspiration to us all. She had a high and unique vocation, being called to be the Mother of God. God may ask us to do many things, and they may well be challenging. We need to remember that God will not ask us to do anything that we are unable to do.

We may not feel worthy, able or willing, but nothing is impossible for God. He will support us in all that we are called to do in his name. We must listen to God, be receptive and say yes to him!

Call to a priesthood

Sarah Mowbray recounts her journey from ordination as a woman priest through her experience of the tradition to a rediscovery of the priesthood of all believers

On the subject of the ordination of women to the priesthood I think I am unique. I am unique by virtue of the way I came to hold my views. I was ordained a priest in 2001 and I now find myself worshipping in a church which has Alternative Episcopal Care, and I now struggle with the issue of women priests.

I was born and brought up in Wrexham, and was encouraged from an early age to attend church. I found myself exploring a vocation to the priesthood from GCSE age, and at the tender age of twenty-one I attended a selection conference and was put forward for ordination training once I had completed my studies at Aberystwyth. After two years at St John's College, Nottingham, I returned to North Wales to start a curacy.

My curacy was not a happy time. I found that I had been thrown in at the deep end and expected to survive. I found myself in a difficult situation. I was about to conduct a funeral in the parish church, and one of the relatives collapsed, and subsequently died, in my arms. I dealt with the situation the best way I could, and was amazed at how I was able to carry on and do the job I was there to do, and do it with care, consideration and still maintain the level of professionalism that I had come to expect from myself.

It was not the situation that got to me; it was the way I was treated afterwards by my incumbent. I felt I was given no support or guidance, and what I was given was too little too late. I became ill, I was given time off work, and was told to take anti-depressants and to see a counsellor.

This was the most heart-breaking thing that had ever happened to me. I am quite a spirited woman (well, being a Taff, what would you expect?), but to have to come face to face with this awful demon that had taken over my life, and to say 'yes, I have failed' was pretty horrible.

I had met James in my final year of studying at Aberystwyth and we had discussed marriage, and had planned to marry in 2003. With my health as it was, and the reason being my unhappiness in North Wales, we decided to bring the wedding forward and married in 2002. I moved to Mirfield to be with James, who was now himself training to be a priest.

I was given permission to officiate in a local parish. This was where I found myself questioning my role as a priest. There were three churches in the parish; they had a moderately Catholic background. The people I served were God-loving, faithful people. They knew what they were doing and why. I would stand in front of these people, celebrating Mass, and realized that I didn't believe in what I was doing myself.

I am a firm believer in transubstantiation, by upbringing and conviction. I struggled with believing that I had the authority, right, or, dare I say it, the power to proclaim that the gifts in my hands were now

Jesus Christ. In my heart I know that when the priest says the dominical words, the simple gifts become something holy. Yet there I was expecting people to believe that this is what I was doing for them, and not believing it myself. I would say the words and do the actions, but knew in my heart that I couldn't do it.

We moved to Kent to begin James' curacy. I was given the opportunity to serve in a local parish, and declined the offer. As soon as I did this, I was relieved. I was able to support James and to build my faith back up. During this time, I was able to stand back and re-evaluate and assess all that had happened so far. I was so happy to be back in the congregation. I had no desire to return to any type of ministry. I didn't miss it one bit.

After a lot of prayer, consideration and discussion, I decided in January, last year, to relinquish my Holy Orders. It was the best decision I have ever made, and not one I took lightly. I was now free, free to be the person God called me to be.

Now that you can see a bit of the journey I have been on, you may well see why I could not, in full conscience, now receive from a woman priest. Part of it is coming from the point of view that, if I got it wrong and put it right, how many have got it wrong and have not?

Part of it comes from my experience of priesthood as a layperson; I could only receive the sacrament from a man. A priest is the representative of Christ; so by virtue of this has to be a man. Also tied into that is the apostolic succession. The orders of a priest are handed down from generation to generation through a succession of men.

I was astounded by how important that was whenever I saw the late Fr Paul Wakelin preside at Mass and also Fr Michael Shields. Fr Michael trained Fr Paul, who in turn trained James, and when I see the line of succession, I can see their similar traits. It is like seeing a grandfather, father and son; you can see the similarities and likeness.

It gives me the confidence in a church that never changes, and never ends. The way that Fr Michael says Mass is just how Fr Paul said Mass, and James says Mass just like Fr Paul. In each case Christ has been passed from one priest to another, through their ordination, which comes from generations long ago, and through training.

When we were talking about the article, James and I got onto the subject of being a priest forever, and what that now means for me. We talked about the rites of ordination and the part that says 'you are a priest forever like Melchizedek of old'. James suggested that I was returning to a priesthood to which I have always belonged, the priesthood of all believers. I had sort of forgotten about that, as I think so many of us do.

Maybe if the priesthood of all believers had been a role that was made a bit more obvious to me as a

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twenty-one-year-old, I may not have gone forward for ordination in the first place – who knows? This could have been something that other women have failed to see as a rewarding and as a viable option. I think that this point will stick with me for a long time: I have returned to the priesthood of all believers, a valuable and rewarding position to be in. I am right where God wants me to be and I couldn't be happier.

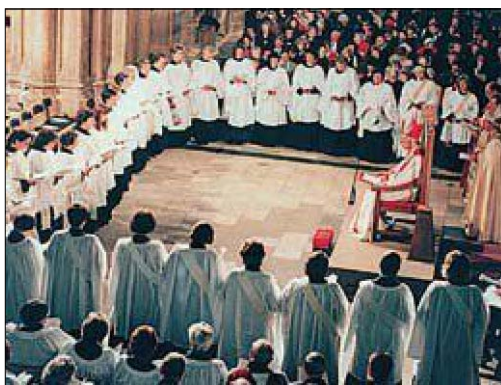
My role within the church is now flourishing. I find myself speaking to people in a way that I never would have before. I find that people approach me and trust me, and I can talk to them about issues that matter to them in a way I could not before. I am not sure if that is just a matter of age (and infirmity, since I am only thirty-two) or whether it is because of the experience I have had and the position I was once in. But it does mean that I am fulfilling the role I once thought was a vocation.

My 'vocation' came from a deep desire to serve the people of God, and to listen to and care for them in the best way that I could. Even though I am no longer ordained, my return to the priesthood of all believers means that that 'vocation' and desire is still fulfilled through

the care, love and support that I am now able to show to people in the church where I worship.

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Now I am very happy. I am able to sit in the congregation and be as involved, or not, in the church. I am there because



I want to be there, and not because I have to be there. I am happy in my role in supporting James in his ministry, though I do try and rebel from the 'vicar's wife' stereotype. I came to our new church with a very clear idea of how I wanted to do the 'vicar's wife' thing. I was very aware, in the back of my mind, that the people had asked James to be their priest.

Although I support him in his ministry, I didn't want people thinking that they had bought one and got one free. I'm not that kind of person. He is the one that is in charge and he is the one that they need to turn to if they need someone. I love the fact that people do come to me, and do trust me, but they know and I know that ultimately he is the man in charge.

I am now a full-time mum and love being at home looking after our two-year-old daughter Grace, and we are looking forward to the next addition to the family in May. I love being a mum and relish the time I spend with Grace and look forward to the challenge of having two children under three. I also look forward to the next challenge that God has in store for me, because I really don't think that this is the end of my adventure, or my story – just the beginning. **ND**

The book of Job concludes with the hopeful message that 'the second half of his life was more fruitful than the first'. Now that I am fifty-something, I am definitely in the second half! Recently I have become aware that in respect to the things of the spirit life experience is a key to understanding. The other week I opened up Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Divine Love* for the umpteenth time and to my amazement I found that I understood what she was writing. It was as if she was speaking to me directly. This did not happen thirty years ago when I was an ordinand! It was measure of how much I had changed. But life does that to one.

As a student of history, I was extremely annoyed by R.W. Southern's remark that 'no one would ever write good history until he had suffered a personal crisis'. Likewise I bridled when I was told, 'You will have to be well over forty before you can have a fruitful ministry in spiritual direction.' But I now see that they were both right.

Julian of Norwich was thirty-one when she received her 'shewings' but it took her another thirty years of living and praying before she 'understood' their message. Teresa of Avila had moments

Ghostly Counsel The second half

*Andy Hawes is Warden of
Edenham Regional Retreat House*

of intense spiritual experience as a child but in Teresa's case it was not until she was forty that she experienced the state of 'mystical union' with Christ for which she is renowned.

There are lessons to be learnt here about the spiritual life. The first is patience. People often express their frustration at the lack of spiritual 'experience' – that is to say, some felt emotional or even physical response in prayer and worship. The fact is that these experiences are God's gift and he gives them as and when he chooses. The second is persistence. This is the one of the key lessons from Mother Julian and St Teresa – we must simply keep going. There is the point where raw faith and naked will are the only things that turn

the heart and mind before God. It would seem that the Lord uses this 'barren' time to prepare the heart to receive him in a new way. It all takes time.

Someone might point out that Jesus was only thirty-two when he died. In response to this, one might argue that the fact of the incarnation makes Jesus a 'special case' but more importantly he lived with the fact of his own death in a way that we are spared – that certainly pushed him into spiritual and psychological territory that few are called to tread. The temptations in the wilderness are one time when we see this being worked out in his mind and will.

Perhaps the most important lesson I have learned from all this is that 'God has prepared good things for those who love him'. The Lord is drawing us closer to himself and he reveals himself to us in the way and time he chooses. There is no substitute for experience. The old saying 'he who lives longest sees most' is especially true in the things of the spirit. For the young it means be patient; for the middle-aged it means be patient; and for those for whom the final whistle is nearest the message is 'be patient'. 'All shall be well and all manner of things shall be well.'

The Guardians Project

David Waller describes the initial stages of the Guardians Project which seeks to inform churchwardens and other key members of the laity about the practicalities of dealing with an interregnum

A few years ago, I was involved in a serious car crash whilst driving on a motorway. Fortunately, whilst my car was a complete 'write-off', I wasn't; indeed, somewhat miraculously, I was able to walk away from the accident and was back at the altar a few days later. However, things could so easily have been very different and as I stood at the altar on the Sunday following the accident I was aware that this could have been the first Sunday of an interregnum. Something unthinkable a week earlier could suddenly have become a reality that my parish would not have been prepared to deal with.

Need for preparation

Now, I am not suggesting that the laity of my parish do not have the necessary skills to run the place without me, nor do I believe that I am indispensable; but it was most definitely the case that, had there been a sudden and unexpected interregnum, no one in the parish would have known what the procedures were, from whom to seek help and what legal processes had to be followed. I do not think we could be blamed for any great negligence here; we had spent long hours making future plans, addressing our poor finances, developing the parish school, revamping adult catechesis, etc. It is a thriving parish, but with a priest who had been in the post for five years, with no obvious health worries and no desire to move, plans for the next interregnum were not exactly at the top of our list of priorities.

So it was that when, some eighteen months later, I received a letter from Fr Francis Gardom floating the idea of his 'Guardians Project', I needed no persuasion as to its importance. The principle is a simple one: that we never know when the next interregnum will occur and that key laity in each parish (guardians) must be prepared and clued up for that eventuality. Readers of *NEW DIRECTIONS* will be only too aware of some of the devious tricks that some diocesan officials will play when a parish is at its most vulnerable. Just a few examples are: archdeacons insisting on chairing PCC meetings; bishops claiming that it will be hard to find a new parish priest unless resolutions are rescinded; and the suggestion that the PEV does not need to be consulted.

Organizing the project

As a result of Fr Gardom's proposal and after discussion with the Bishop of Richborough, we gathered a group of local clergy and two members of the FiF executive to explore the idea further, with the aim of setting up a pilot event in the East London part of the Diocese of Chelmsford. That initial meeting was full of enthusiasm and we soon began to add flesh to the bare bones of the proposal. We agreed that parishes must be prepared for their next interregnum as a matter of urgency; that the key people to be targeted were the churchwardens, but that other key laity should also be included; that we needed a lawyer to explain

the relevant legislation to people; and that the PEV must be seen as the sponsor of the project.

By the end of that initial meeting, we had agreed that we would willingly act as a pilot for the Guardians Project; that we would convene a meeting for key laity who were in a real sense 'guardians' of the faith in their parishes and that the clergy would also be invited; that Fr James Patrick (well known to readers of *NEW DIRECTIONS* from his work on the FiF legal team) should

be invited to lead the day, which would be held at St Michael's, Walthamstow.

I was given the task of sending out invitations to the meeting, and I have to say it was the easiest thing I have ever done: there was no need to twist arms or send out follow-up reminders – all but one of the invited parishes responded within days and sent a number of people to the meeting, including, in the vast majority of

cases, the parish priest.

Increased understanding

The day arrived and the meeting was, by any standards, a resounding success. We began with Mass, offered by Bishop Keith. After a short coffee break, Fr Patrick addressed the assembled group of more than sixty people. Fr Patrick struck that wonderful and necessary balance of addressing some important legal issues whilst making it all fun. By the end of the morning session, we all understood the legal processes and other details more clearly, and we were also encouraged to begin *now* the task of being proactive in planning for the future. If there will be honest concerns about the viability of a parish, start thinking about it now so that you can have a positive suggestion to make

before others impose something negative. Many dioceses have some kind of ongoing 'vision process' or 'Mission Action Plan'. Our parishes must engage in those processes, and doing so will mean that our sense of mission and purpose is already established and the parish profile might naturally flow from what already exists.

After lunch we gathered for a short session for further questions and also some words of advice and encouragement from Bishop Keith. We were also reminded that it is very important to

get 'sound' priests to cover in an interregnum: sometimes there are neighbouring curates or retired clergy, but where there is no spare cover, might it be better to change Mass times so our priests could travel? And of course, priests would need to be willing to travel to serve the faithful.

The Guardians Project is now ready to go far and wide. I would recommend it wherever a group of parishes could be got together. But far more important than any recommendation from me is the appreciation expressed by my churchwardens and others for what the project has done for their understanding and confidence; it has empowered them to go Forward in Faith when I am gone. **ND**

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a week earlier could
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Fighting for honour

Paul Griffin seeks to restore the politically incorrect concepts of honour and respectability to their proper place in society

Does our age not resemble that of the decadent Roman Empire? Their drama was sexy and violent: we have James Bond. They adored vast banquets: we have the *Good Food Guide*. The Romans gathered in vast arenas to watch men in conflict: we have the Cup Final. The Romans treated their state religion as a mere convenience. To quote Dr Edward Norman, they were Anglicans really.

This probably only proves that deep in any human being, whatever the state of society, you will find a fondness for sex, excitement and good grub, combined with a reluctance to confront the big issues of life. However, I do regret one feature that characterizes our own age more than any other, it is the loss of meaning of the word 'honour'.

Concepts easily become fouled, and that word is no exception. It survives, but only just, and has overtones of keen headteachers talking about the honour of the school, or keen Mafia members talking about honour killings. It is used to indicate humility, as in the Birthday Honours List, or 'It is an honour to be asked to address you', but this is a long way from the old meaning of the term, which you can see best in Shakespeare and his seventeenth-century colleagues. Jokingly, John Donne wrote to the Countess of Bedford:

'Honour is so sublime perfection,

And so refined that when God
was alone
And featureless at first, himself
had none...'

But later, he sums it up: 'Being and seeming is your equal care...' I believe the lady was well worth the compliment, which sums up the proper attitude.

Outward appearance

In those days it was not sufficient to be good; in addition, our goodness should be clearly visible. We should certainly do good in secret, but must not on that account neglect our general appearance. All ages have the problem of hypocrisy, but our own has the very common problem that we feel outward appearances are comparatively unimportant. Headteachers who still talk about the honour of the school find it a desperate struggle to persuade children to appear decent and civilized human beings.

Schools that teach proper history love to describe the hypocrisy of the Victorian era, when the word 'honour' had largely been replaced by 'respectability'. To see this word as a mere cloak for evil is unfair. My own dear parents valued respectability. They wanted to be able to lift up their heads among their contemporaries, and although they were not particularly angelic, they valued decency and kindness, and imposed pretty firm restrictions on themselves.

The idea of respectability has in its turn become fouled, and we are in danger of losing a vital concept altogether. 'So', says a man to his employer, 'I am living in an adulterous relationship with the wife of another employee. What is it to do with you, or with how I perform my duties? I will thank you to keep out of my private life, and look after what concerns you.'

A vital concept

It is, by the way, when private lives become public that those involved continue to speak of their privacy. Worse, they may make that adolescent remark: 'I don't care what people think of me.' We in the Church have become only too accustomed to the privacy argument, and we no longer counter it with the concept of honour or respectability. They are politically incorrect terms, yet they signify a most important Christian principle. How on earth can we recapture it?

I would love to restore 'honour' to its place, now that the crazy business of duelling has dwindled to 'I'll see you outside', and public horror of the term has subsided. Brutus, remember, was an honourable man. He was no St Paul, but he knew that he was surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. He had – what shall we call it? – 'integrity'? Alas, we are already beginning to talk mockingly of people 'bristling with integrity'. Long may we fight to keep these concepts clean. **ND**

Permitted things

Francis Gardom takes leave of the good/bad folk of St Grizelda's

Finally, let's go into St Grizelda's Sacristy and meet Mr Horder, the Verger. He's been a lifelong friend of the treasurer, Mr Poundstock, and in some ways resembles him.

He's only too glad to show people the wonderful 'treasures' (as he calls them) which they've acquired over the years, and you feel as he speaks about them, that they mean the world to him. Nobody could be more diligent about their safekeeping, and he, and he alone is allowed to get them out, put them away and keep them polished for use. What an estimable man! So what's the problem?

Well, one problem is what happens when

the treasures start to wear out – or the church is given another chalice or chasuble. For so deep is Mr Horder's affection towards what he feels, subconsciously no doubt, are 'his' possessions, that the very thought of pensioning them off, or introducing a 'rival' feels like an impending bereavement. So St Grizelda's has become a church of frayed embroideries, chalices which have lost their gilding, and albs whose lace hangs off their extremities 'like flax off a distaff'.

Before leaving St Grizelda's let's just remind ourselves what those sins we've encountered have in common. They're all *eu-peristatos* – 'admired by many'. Sins

whose perpetrators are unaware; or even proud of. Sins which started their careers as virtues, but by over- or wrong- use have been transformed into *vices*.

'We perish by permitted things' says the proverb. Those sins which impede the progress of apprentice-saints like you and me are not *forbidden* in any book on morality. On the contrary they're sins which are originally virtuous but which have got out of control. The very fact that they are 'admired by many' makes them much more difficult to discover and correct.

So there we are. We've taken a whistle stop tour and noted some of the sins of the good folk of St Grizelda's. The next step we should undertake is some self-examination with a view to discovering whether anything of the kind might just, *conceivably*, be true of ourselves!

Lost Victorian monk

Alan Edwards reflects on the life and eccentricities of Fr Ignatius, fervent orator and evangelist for Jesus and controversial and ill-disciplined pioneer monk

To see him in or out of church you'd say, "There's a Papist of papists." Listening to him you'd say "There speaks a champion Protestant." A verdict on someone who today embodies the NEW DIRECTIONS masthead 'Serving Evangelicals and Catholics'?

Possibly, but actually a contemporary tribute to Fr Ignatius of Llanthony, the centenary of whose death occurs this year, an Evangelical Catholic fittingly accompanied across the Jordan by Ira Sankey who also died a hundred years ago.

Joseph Leycester Lyne, the future Fr Ignatius, was born the year the Victorian age began and became one of its most colourful religious figures. Charles Bradlaugh, the Richard Dawkins of his time, admitted that Ignatius was the only man whose influence he feared. Gladstone thought him one of the greatest orators of his day, oratory which drew vast crowds to his mission rallies.

He felt destined for the church from childhood. Nursery games involved services for his playmates where he always 'had to be the man in the nightgown – the one in charge,' according to Baroness Bertouch, his hagiographer.

Made deacon in 1860 he was never advanced to the priesthood because of his insubordination to authority and eccentric behaviour though, such was his self-confidence in his successful moments, he probably felt brother to that other deacon Francis, whose public stripping to symbolize the embracing of poverty might also have been regarded as a trifle eccentric.

Ignatius recorded that his earliest religious impetus was to evade Hell and that he saw becoming a monk as an insurance. It was not until he underwent an Evangelical style conversion experience while convalescing from one of his bouts of ill health – like Hope Patten his illnesses often reflected set-backs – when he saw that, 'love of his Saviour was better than fear of Damnation.'

Curacies with Prynn at Plymouth and Lowder in East London saw him demonstrate a power in preaching, and the conviction that the BCP must be interpreted as completely Catholic in doctrine and ceremonial expression.

His preaching fervour disregarded the ruling made at his deaconing that he was not to preach until priesting, which was not planned to follow for three years because of his lack of a theological training. Joseph saw no need for this: the Bible, the BCP and the Sarum service books contained all that he needed and he adopted what was to be his lifelong motto, 'Jesus Only.'

He also adopted a monastic habit, the name Ignatius and put himself at the head of various short-lived quasi-Benedictine communities, one of which briefly contained Charles Walker, author of *The Ritual Reason Why*, who soon fled because he couldn't stand the Rule insisted upon by Ignatius. Not enough sleep or food; too many services and too much work.

Although Ignatius's ambition was to restore the Benedictine life to the Church of England he lacked the stability that was at the heart of the Benedictine ethos. Not only was his temperament mercurial – manic depressive many have said – but the chronic shortage of money that dogged his various monastic ventures meant that he had to undertake frequent preaching cum cash-raising crusades.

In 1869 he eventually found a place to establish a permanent community, Capel y ffin, a short distance from the ancient Llan-

thony Abbey, an area that also had attracted that other restless soul, Walter Savage Landor.

For near on forty years until his death he presided over the building of a new Llanthony Abbey. He was still short of funds, having to employ jerry-builders, gathering around him an ever-changing army of followers, nuns as well as monks.

He ruled with a mixture of bullying and sentimentality allied to his own do-it-yourself versions of monastic rule and liturgy. Missionary tours continued (including to the Indians of the USA) and his fame grew. Press photos of Ignatius cuddling a surplice-clad infant on his knee, 'the Boy Oblate', if published today, would have hordes of *Sun* readers chanting 'Paedo-priest' outside the Abbey doors.

By the mid-19th century Rome had its Lourdes, so Ignatius was not at all surprised when his own devotion to the Blessed Virgin was rewarded by her appearing to him as an apparition in a bush in the Abbey grounds in August 1880. Miracles, including many self-claimed wonder cures, like controversy, always surrounded Ignatius.

Controversy came from his frequent brushes with Anglican authority and from Protestant opponents who delighted to publish accounts of life in Ignatius's 'Romish monastery', provided by some of the many refugees. Not all the lurid detail was the product of Kensitite imagination.

Failing to secure priesting from Canterbury, he gained 'ordination' in 1898 at the hands of a dubious *episcopus vagans*, an act damaging him more than all the Protestant pillorying. When he died in 1908 his community died with him.

A failure? Not to the many touched by his missions and sermons, but certainly in his ambition to establish a lasting Benedictine community.

But if he was too undisciplined to produce a stable community and his poorly-built abbey church crumbled into ruins, he nevertheless built a wider acceptance of the monastic ideal when England was still predominantly Protestant in mood. His courting of publicity by his own missions, and participation in such enterprises as the Moody & Sankey campaigns, touched wider audiences than his more restrained monastic contemporaries.

If you have ever visited the remaining monastic buildings at Capel-y-ffin and seen the simple graves with their inscription 'Jesu yn Unig' (Ignatius became a cultural Welsh Nationalist) and watched as the sun sinks over the all-surrounding silent hills you can just believe that the Virgin Mary did visit that peaceful place in his time.

In his day Francis Kilvert came to Llanthony and saw the monks hoe-ing spinach. When, a century later, on one of our visits to the Capel-y-ffin buildings, then owned by Eric Gill's granddaughter, we were invited to 'help yourself to the vegetables during your stay', we were delighted that the descendants of the Ignatian spinach still flourished.

We over indulged ourselves on Eggs Mornay – excess that surely did honour to the excessive spirit of Fr Ignatius OSB 1837–1908. **ND**



The small lay church

*In a final extract from the Evangelism Working Party report
Philip North returns to the need for renewal among the laity
and the importance of venturing into new, risk-taking areas*

So far we have discussed doing what we do at present but doing it in a more evangelistically aware way. But we need to go even further, into uncomfortable, risk-taking areas. Anglo-Catholics seem to have a terrible fear of risk-taking, and indeed there seems to be a tendency to mock or undermine any new or creative evangelistic method.

Why, for example, are there so few Catholic church plants when Holy Trinity Brompton alone is planting one every six months? Do we lack the resources? Do we lack the confidence? Are our own churches so small that we cannot bear to lose any people to plant a church elsewhere? Or are we just afraid that it will go wrong, afraid of failure and the mockery that will follow?

We have left the work of planting churches and experimenting with new forms of church life (such as the cell) to Evangelicals, nervous that any departure from the pattern of church life with which we are familiar is somehow un-Catholic. Our critique of these Fresh Expressions has often been that, because they are not eucharistic, they are not 'church'. Our response needs to be a readiness to experiment with new forms of eucharistic community, with youth congregations and cells. We need to have the courage to re-set the jewels of the Catholic tradition in such a way that we can connect with a generation who have no knowledge of the church and its worship.

Molecular leadership

Many Anglo-Catholic parishes grow to about 100 communicants and then stagnate. The problem is that a priest-centred model of pastoral care prevents growth beyond the size where the clergy can know every member of the congregation by name.

To build strong churches we need to create within them smaller units of belonging in order that pastoral care can be shared with lay people. A traditional Anglo-Catholic technique has been to use devotional groups such as Cells of the Society of Our Lady of Walsingham or of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament to achieve this. Other parishes will need to experiment with house groups or even with a transition to a cell-based model of belonging. There is Catholic

precedent for this in the Base Communities of South America.

Nonetheless the heart of the parish community will remain the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. Nothing we have read convinces members of the working party that the loss of Sunday is anything but a disaster for evangelization. But with fewer priests and the cost of maintaining historic buildings, we shall surely see fewer Sunday celebrations, but ones which are larger and better resourced with people travelling. Continuing pastoral care, growth and nurture will then be provided in the local group, meeting during the week; often these groups will be lay-led 'Communities of the Word' gathered around the Scriptures rather than the Eucharist.

In some dioceses, where Anglo-Catholic parishes are thin on the ground, a retired or non-stipendiary priest will have a travelling ministry, presiding at the Eucharist for these groups from time to time. It is to be hoped that the new *Church Planting Regulations* before Synod will be seen as applying to these groups as well.

Using the new media

We are living at a time of unbelievably fast change. Most young people when seeking information about any aspect of their life will now go first to the internet; when they want to seek opinions they will go to Facebook or Myspace. It is not enough to use the new media simply as an additional means of communicating the Gospel. We actually need to evangelize the culture that those new media have brought about. The message needs to be integrated into that new culture.

There are many ways in which we can use the new media to advance the evangelistic work of the Church and we need to be creative and energetic in advancing them. Many churches have websites, many are building a presence on social interaction websites, and this can all be done fairly easily. The important point is that, if this is to be done at all, it must be done well. There are few things as shoddy as a parish website advertising the date of the Christmas Fayre for 2004 or a data projector breaking down before a Youth Mass. This is an area where the use of skilled lay people is vital.

Good preaching is an absolutely essen-

tial part of evangelization. When done well it can evangelize, renew, nurture and feed. However, the arrival of mass media and the slick styles of communication seen on radio and television make the preacher's art even harder.

Solid preaching

It is no longer any good to expect congregations to have the discipline to sit and listen to dusty homilies. Preachers need to learn to adjust to changing times. They need to answer the right questions and communicate in a style that captures the imagination, making good use of story and illustration.

Few priests have received thorough training in homiletics, and once in the parish there are few opportunities for feedback or further formation. We would suggest that clergy and lay preachers are given regular opportunities for training and peer review of their preaching techniques. We long for a return of the days when the Anglo-Catholic movement provided the finest preachers in the land.

Evangelizing laity

Whenever evangelization is discussed, people begin to feel inadequate or guilty. Many priests and lay people feel genuinely depressed at the decline of their congregations and bewildered at what to do about it. Many Anglo-Catholic parishes are located in areas of acute social deprivation where 'success' needs to be measured in terms very different from bums on pews. However we believe that, in the new evangelization, there are techniques that any parish serious about renewal can use in order to sharpen its evangelistic ministry.

Over and over again members of the working party, and those we have consulted, have made it clear that it is with the renewal of the laity that evangelization begins. The parishes that develop lay ministry are the parishes that grow. It is when we can unlock the clerical stranglehold and let the gifts of our laypeople flourish that renewal will come. This takes great risk on the part of clergy and people alike, but if we are unable to take that risk, then the free province will be nothing but a paper dream and the Anglo-Catholic movement nothing but a footnote in the ecclesiastical history books. **ND**

devotional

The fifty days of Easter

Fr Crispin Harrison CR

A devout lady of Caribbean extraction, who attended a London church, impressed me because her dresses and hats worn at Mass always followed the colours marking the Church's seasons. On Palm Sunday she changed Lenten purple for Passiontide red; at the Easter Vigil she was splendid in gold and white; and so throughout Eastertide until its glorious finale on the fiftieth day when she was decked out in Pentecostal red.

Her practice was strange but she had the right idea. All of us should make much of the themes of the Church's year. We do this in Lent but now that we are in the Great Easter season it will be spiritually beneficial to reflect every day on its wonderful, uplifting message: Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.

The fifty days from Easter Day to Pentecost were celebrated by Christians as early as the second century. They were days of rejoicing to mark the resurrection of the Lord, days of new growth as newly baptized members swelled the numbers of the faithful, days when the meaning of the awesome mysteries of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist) were daily expounded by holy bishops.

The themes of Eastertide are a great remedy for any who feel downcast, whether because of personal problems, or the state of our Church, or the sufferings of humanity. We should not be like those who have no hope, because our hope is in God who raised Jesus from the dead. He is always with us in his risen and glori-

ous power so we need never be anxious or afraid. Our hope is in the Lord who promised that the gates of death would never prevail against his Church. Eastertide sets our sights on our ultimate destination and reward.

How may we keep our attention fixed on the risen Jesus throughout the fifty days? Here are some thoughts. We could have a small visual aid in our room, such as a candle, some flowers, a picture. Maybe we could try to change this each week. At Mirfield on Saturday nights throughout the year, we replace Night Prayer with a short service called 'The Resurrection Vigil' which we borrowed from the Canadian Prayer Book. Anyone could compile a service like that for daily use in Eastertide. The order includes an Easter hymn, Psalm 118, a gospel account of the empty tomb and the Lord's appearance to his disciples, and concluding prayers.

The Stations of the Resurrection in *Common Worship, Times and Seasons* (CHP, 2006) are a valuable resource for public or private use. There are nineteen stations based on extracts from the New Testament. Most of these are short pieces from the resurrection stories in the gospels. In addition there are the earliest witness to the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 and from the Acts of the Apostles, the accounts of the Ascension, the day of Pentecost, and the conversion of St Paul. For daily use, just one or two readings would be appropriate, followed by meditation and prayer as time allows.

Holy Week has been long established in Christian practice and it is good to notice an increasing celebration of the Easter Vigil. A fuller and richer observance of the great fifty days of Easter culminating in a mighty crescendo at Pentecost is much to be desired to fill our hearts with joy, confidence and peace. **ND**



Light bulbs

Marigolds in olde-worlde English cottage gardens were not primarily part of a 'Homes & Gardens' décor, but a defence against witches, relations to the Transylvanian garlic that deterred vampires. To repel Satan, the witches' master, it was even worth throwing away some salt, that most costly item in the medieval housewife's shopping basket.

Fear of the forces of darkness and Hell haunted the medieval imagination. Preaching friars, media men of their day, warned of a doom that awaited unless the correct means of salvation were sought. Church wall-paintings – predecessors of *Panorama* – reinforced the message. The ever-present plague meant that the Dance of Death, rather than *Strictly Come Dancing*, topped the fourteenth-century charts.

Rich folk could invest in masses for the rescue and repose of their souls. Even Hodge, or probably his wife, could light a candle, while the Guilds, the mega-buck businesses of medieval England, could pay for a perpetual light display in the parish church. Pardons and indulgences could be obtained to wipe out sin's footprints.

Today the fires of Hell have become but a flicker for twenty-first-century Everyman. Yet fear of impending doom is still abroad. Once it was The Bomb; now climate change is the threat invoked by preachers of our day whose pulpit is the press and cathedral the TV screen. Modern man is as frightened by the image of melting ice caps as his medieval forebears were by wall-paintings depicting the terrors of Hell.

Sin now has a carbon footprint but indulgences can still be gained if you plant a tree. Carbon off-setting for the successors of the Guilds has replaced paying for a perpetual light in the parish church. Don't plant marigolds but top up your recycling bin. Don't throw salt over your shoulder but refuse to take a plastic bag and shut your eyes to budget flight adverts.

Eventually, by government decree, all light bulbs will be low energy. Churches will presumably not be exempt and some bishops have already called for their immediate introduction. As we peer through the gloom, another link with the Middle Ages and its 'dim religious light'?

Alan Edwards

God is God

The identification of God with Being has its origins in God's revelation to Moses on Sinai
Patrick Henry Reardon is a Senior Editor of *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*

There is a glaring fallacy in the contemporary presumption that idolatry is found only in polytheism. I admit, of course, that all polytheism is necessarily idolatrous, but it seems not to have occurred to most folks that the confession of one false god is just as idolatrous as the confession of several. Monotheism is no defence against idolatry. This modern misunderstanding about idolatry, moreover, is the twin and steady companion of another, the strange fancy that all monotheists necessarily confess the same divinity.

Arguably the clearest spokesman for the latter fallacy may be that C.S. Lewis character who forthrightly declared, 'Tash is another name for Aslan. All that old idea of us being right and the Calormenes wrong is silly. We know better now. The Calormenes use different words but we all mean the same thing. Tash and Aslan are only two different names for you know Who. That's why there can never be any quarrel between them. Get that into your heads, you stupid brutes. Tash is Aslan: Aslan is Tash.'

The telltale line in that discourse, I submit, is 'We know better now.' On matters respecting God, I cannot think of anything we know better now. The character that made that proclamation was, of course, the Ape in Lewis' *The Last Battle*, and it really was an apish thing to say. Although I have heard his thesis proclaimed times out of mind, it cannot stand up to two seconds of critical reflection.

Let us recall that monotheism made its appearance in this world in the same voice that identified the one God's essence with his existence: 'I am the One Who Is.' When Moses heard that auto-identification, perhaps he did not have a clear idea, at first, what it meant, but he faithfully recorded the words, and the

faithful have been thinking about them seriously ever since.

Typical of the faithful in this respect was St Gregory of Nyssa, who interpreted the words to mean that God revealed himself as 'the Existent One' [*Against Eunomius*, 2.4]. The same writer reflected further, 'all things depend on Him Who is, nor can there be anything that does not owe its existence to Him Who is' [*The Great Catechism*, 25]. Gregory asserts two things in these texts. First, it is of God's very being that he exists, which is to say that God exists of himself. Whatever exists, besides God, exists only because of God.

Christian thinkers have converted these theological considerations into apologetic arguments for the existence of God. First, there is God as Being in Himself. Now it is a fact that no pagan philosopher ever thought to identify God as Being. This historical fact is perhaps difficult for us to appreciate, because the history of Christian reflection has so accustomed us to a proposition unknown to ancient pagan thought.

The striking fact about this argument is that it never occurred to anyone outside of the data of biblical revelation. Nor is there is any reason to believe that it would have entered anyone's mind except for that voice on Sinai.

This thesis, too, provided an argument for God's existence, an inductive, *a posteriori* case known as the Cosmological Argument. This line of reasoning, which is found explicitly in Holy Scripture itself, endeavours to discover an explanation (or efficient cause) for the existence of those things that do, in fact, exist. Both of these approaches to the existence of God are based in the voice from Sinai, in which God identified himself as the Existing One, the One who, needing nothing from us, nonetheless decided to talk to us. **ND**

Sacred vision

William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825–1905) was one of the most popular and well regarded of the high Victorian school of French painting. Idealized, hyper-realist, and rich in detail, his draughtsmanship of the human form is exceptional (far better than his older contemporary Ingres, for example). He produced sentimental pictures of young women and children, and classical subjects which provided the proper excuse for sinuous nudes.

In the midst of this secular production, he also painted a smaller number of traditional Christian subjects in the same intense and colourful style. If they evoke a devotional response, it is not one of any great passion, but they are certainly gorgeous, more than merely decorative, and his Virgin Mothers are certainly stronger than most we see from the same period in our churches.

This, *Les saintes femmes au tombeau*, was first exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1890.



Les saintes femmes au tombeau

The colours are severely muted; the robes and gestures, even the stonework, show a family likeness with his classical subjects, though coarser and less delicate. If Athens is for the aristocracy, Jerusalem is for a poorer class of people.

The young man in white, only just visible in the light that comes from the tomb, is there presumably because he has to be; in terms of the painting he is largely redundant. The first and third women are well composed, but all the meaning and power of the picture is focussed in the central figure, in her face and her clasped hands.

Influenced by photography, there is an immediacy and vividness. And then what? Surely, it takes more than a facial expression to convey meaning. For all its effectiveness, there is surprisingly little depth to this depiction of the empty tomb. This is Easter day, but not the 49 other days of the Easter season.

Anthony Saville

Unity for mission

Sister Mary Michael CHC on some lessons from John Charles Ryle (1816–1900), the first Bishop of Liverpool, who taught the importance of working together for the sake of evangelism, in spite of internal disagreements

Staunch Evangelical though he was to the end, J.C. Ryle came at last to see that the continued wellbeing of his beloved CofE, as the Established Church of the land, mattered more than trying to oust ritualism and High Church doctrine. Despite inconsistencies along the way, his final stance could be described as: live and let live while getting on with the real job of mission. Have we something to learn here?

Ryle was in fact an ecumenist ahead of his time, seeing the need for courteous relations and dialogue not only between the denominations but actually within his own church. There was a perpetual threat of attrition in the late nineteenth-century CofE, with believers opting for Nonconformity or Rome because of the acute divisions within the established Church. But Ryle pointed out that there are always disagreements in any family. Many of the issues involved were only secondary, in Ryle's estimation. Such minor differences should be tolerated: facing east, wearing a surplice, daily services, etc.

In the spirit of a Cardinal Mercier, or an Abbé Paul Couturier, he urged 'the great duty of promoting brotherly kindness and avoiding quarrels'. The way to achieve this was to meet up with one another since the opposing parties were living in mutual ignorance of each other's viewpoints. As Ryle put it in one of his many pamphlets, 'I often think they [the High Churchmen] know no more about us [Evangelicals] than a native of Timbuktoo knows about skating and ice cream.'

Much could be achieved, he felt, through the reading of one another's writings, but nothing could replace actually meeting face to face, especially where prominent churchmen are concerned. They should set aside all else and have only the Bible and Prayer Book with them as they conferred. Ryle was asking for greater mutual trust, with the recognition that both parties were actually on the same side. Do we see it like this now?

Limits of inclusion

Though Bishop Ryle did not believe the parish system to be sacrosanct, he did recognize that the right man had to be found for each local church. Then every incumbent should get on with his

job according to his way of doing things, his churchmanship. The clergy were not merely administrators or self-styled social workers however. Two things alone mattered for Ryle: preaching the Gospel and visiting. Old-fashioned? Hardly. As vital now as then, surely.

Ryle admitted that he could not square the circle. How far could extremists go without excommunicating themselves, and any way, who had the ultimate authority in the CofE to exclude them? In response, he urged Ritualists to show restraint and be content with what they had achieved. Meanwhile Evangelicals

if they had to differ, Ryle proposed that they should 'agree to differ pleasantly'

should stay where they were, but should not be obliged to accept what went against their consciences. Are such attitudes still viable in our current situation or have we reached the parting of the ways?

At all events both sides were encouraged to show 'charity, consideration and kindness of language in communication' towards each other. If they had to differ, Ryle proposed that they should 'agree to differ pleasantly'. After all, neither side actually had a monopoly of the truth, and so they should agree to work together and share insights. It was not that doctrine was unimportant; rather evangelism was vital and must be carried on despite internal disagreements. Such remains our plea today.

A new evangelization

The burning need to preach the Gospel led Ryle to advocate an additional kind of ministry. Where an incumbent had grown stale and disillusioned, an evangelist, under the bishop's authority, should be brought in to remedy things. Moreover, the laity were not to sit back idle. Ryle was adamant that they should have a part to play in all aspects of church life, except in those things proper only to the ordained ministry.

He had strong words to say about this: 'Above all let every parochial incumbent make a point of teaching every commu-

nificant that he is an integral part of the Church of England, and is bound to do all that he can for its welfare. On this point, I grieve to say, the Methodists and Dissenters beat Churchmen hollow. With them every new member is a new home missionary. Never will things go well with the Church of England until every individual member realises that he is 'part of the concern'.

And women were not excluded here. Ryle instituted what he termed 'Bible Women'. They were sent into some of the worst of the Liverpool slums where men could not go, to preach the faith as much by their works of mercy as by their teaching and example. There are obvious similarities here with the work done by the early sisterhoods of the Catholic Revival.

Ryle's desire for lay involvement anticipated later developments. He wanted lay representation in Convocation and in the Bishops' Councils, which he felt should be set up. However, he was hampered by the ever-present reluctance of the church to change its ways. As he amusingly puts it: 'Like some fossilised country squire who lives twenty miles from a railway and never visits London, the poor dear old Church of England must still travel in the old family coach, shoot with the old flint-locked, single-barrel gun, and wear the old jack-boots and long pigtail.'

Looking to ourselves

So what would Ryle think of us today? He was deeply apprehensive in his earlier years about 'ritualism', even seeing its continuing growth as a sign of the coming of the End Times. He was not averse to satirizing it as mere ostentation and an insincere holiness: 'This holiness was a delusion, which satisfied only silly young women, brainless young men and Italian bandits. 'Real' holiness consists of a tender conscience based on the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and the last half of all of Paul's epistles.'

How do we measure up to this now, whether as Catholic or Evangelical Anglicans? We can only expect to retain an honoured place in our much-loved CofE if our aspiration to holiness is totally without guile or humbug and our genuine love for one another at least aspires to the standards of 1 Corinthians 13. **ND**

Heritage

We are indebted to Reuters of India for news that the Church of England has shelled out no less than £72,485 for Mary, Queen of Scots' death warrant. Now, before George Austin starts getting hot under the collar, it's only fair to say that it was through the generosity of 'heritage organizations' and 'wealthy benefactors' that the Lambeth Palace Library was able to save this gem for the nation.

Apparently, though, the warrant is a *duplicate* copy, complete with the annotations of the then principal clerk to the Privy Council. All of which got 30DAYS thinking: we know just where to lay our hands on a *duplicate* copy of the Forward in Faith Statement on Communion and Code of Practice, complete with the annotations of the then Secretary of Forward in Faith.

We confidently look forward to the inevitable phone call from Lambeth Palace, as they set about saving Fr Kirk's doodles for the nation. We must warn them, though: it might not be worth a whopping £72,485 but we won't accept a penny under £7.24!



Vaut une volte face?

Excitement abounded up in t'North West, when the news hit the streets that the new Suffragan Bishop of Middleton was to be the Archdeacon of Rochdale, the Venerable Mark Davies. A former incumbent of an ABC parish in the diocese of Wakefield, Davies is also a former Deputy Master of SSC.

The appointment of a traditionalist bishop at the tender age of just 44 seemed to many to be just too good to be true. Which, indeed, it turned out to be, once news emerged that the Archdeacon had changed his mind on the big and boring issue and would, in the fullness of time, be ordaining women to the priesthood.



Jolly japes

Grateful thanks to the 30DAYS reader who jammed up our inbox recently with no less than seven photographs from that haven of all that is right-on, Westcott House. Unfortunately, though, our anon-

ymous informant seems to have got his or her wires well and truly crossed, for, in the accompanying email, he or she claims that the piccies record a recent commemoration of St Radegund, who, as we all know, 'led an austere and devout existence'.

But given the amount of beer to be seen in the photos, it looks more like a party – and, indeed, one particular photo of a fetching, not to say pouting, young lady, wearing a cassock, a (homemade) seminarian collar, a glittery tiara and a sash bearing the legend 'Westcott Tat' does little to convey either austerity or devotion. And presiding over the celebration is none other than 'Mother' Angela Tilby, former Vice Principal of Westcott and Vicar of St Benet's, Cambridge. Still, as she is a Consultant to the Liturgical Commission, no doubt it was all to be found in *Common Worship*.



Come on you priests!

Mind you, if the *Daily Record* is to be believed, things aren't that much better in the panting heart. Following three red cards shown to players at the Vatican's annual football tournament – the Clericus Cup, apparently – officials have had to come down hard on crowds of supporters, particularly from a number of Seminaries, because they have been making too much noise.

Matches kick off at 9.00am on a Sunday and local residents, trying to enjoy a nice lie-in, have been put off their stroke by 'drums, rattles, trumpets and megaphones.' Organizer Felice Alborghetti said: 'We have told fans not to bring any musical instruments to games and have asked the players to keep the game as clean as possible.'



Every vote counts

The introduction of electronic voting gizmos at the General Synod's February sessions has produced some interesting data on the voting behaviour of our synodical rulers. Perhaps of even more interest than *how* someone voted is *whether* they voted at all, and all the facts are there for you at <www.cofe.anglican.

org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2008.html>.

A look at the House of Bishops reveals that, in the eleven divisions, only five bishops managed to vote in every one. Golden electronic voting pads, then, to the two Archbishops and to the Bishops of Hereford, Ripon & Leeds and Burnley. Coming up strongly behind, taking part in ten divisions, were the Bishops of Guildford, St Edmundsbury & Ipswich, Basingstoke and Beverley.

But, at the other end of the scale, there were those who perhaps found the new gizmos troublesome: the Bishops of Bristol and Ely seem to have taken part in only one division each. But they fared better than the Bishop of Southwark, who seems not have voted at all in any of the eleven divisions.

The 30DAYS General Synod Correspondent is sure our Tom was there throughout, and abstention on anything has never seemed to be his forte, so what was he up to? Answers on a postcard, please.



Signs of the Times

Meanwhile, over at <www.women-priests.org>, the campaign to persuade the Holy Father to take leave of his senses and permit the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Catholic Church is really taking off.

There is now an online petition for folk to sign and, since it started in early June last year, no less than – wait for it – 1,344 people have put their names to a facile letter demanding action from the Supreme Pontiff. Given that the latest figures available put the total membership of the Catholic Church at 1.131 billion, it really is inexplicable that this cogent plea seems to be falling on deaf ears. 1,344?

Why, that's 0.0001188329% of the membership of the Catholic Church – or 0.0000001188% if you prefer the alternative definition of a billion! Either way, it sure is a lot of people...

*Copy for 30 DAYS
should reach FiF office
by the 10th day of the month:
30days@forwardinfaith.com*

Fostering vocations

Any new province or jurisdiction will need to have a clear policy on the nurturing of vocations to its ministry
Ann Turner outlines the proposals of the FiF Working Party

The task we were given was to produce a select number of proposals for the fostering of vocations in the light of a possible new province. We chose six priorities, two immediate, two medium-term and two more general themes. If it reads a little as though it were devised by a committee, I suppose that's because it was; these ideas were thoroughly worked over by a group of people with strong views and commitment.

A wider brief

To oversee and organize the formal discernment of vocations, we advocate the Roman model of a Director of Vocations in overall charge, with a Director of Ordinands under him.

The CoFE's structures for recruitment and selection of ministers reflect the way in which it has only recently moved to acknowledge a wider variety of ministries than those of the ordained. Some ministries are within the scope of diocesan recruitment, e.g. ordained ministry, including a permanent diaconate, and Reader ministry; others are not, strictly speaking, the responsibility of a diocese at all. The Church Army is responsible for its own recruitment and selection, as are other mission agencies. Religious communities are also independent.

The post of Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO) is well established, as may be that of Warden of Readers. More recently, some dioceses have begun appointing Vocations Advisors who may seek to act as a coordinating influence, reminding potential candidates of the variety of ways that their ministry might be expressed.

At present Vocations Advisors are generally appointed on a part-time basis and find themselves line-managed by a stipendiary DDO. The function of recruitment is too often left to the DDO, with the consequence that candidates have to pass through the hands of the DDO *before* being able to consider any non-ordained ministry. This inevitably generates a sense that the DDO is sifting out the best candidates for the ministry with which he/she is especially concerned, and passing the less promising candidates to others.

It would seem sensible for a Director of Vocations to occupy the senior role,

line-managing colleagues whose task is to help candidates explore vocation to particular ministries within the Church of God, be they lay or ordained.

A similar attitude was urged upon all parish priests, that they should be open to a whole range of vocations for their laity – to encourage and enable the effective ministry of each member of the parish (and not merely steer a few towards ordination).

If this principle is accepted, then it is worth beginning now, with a recognized FiF Director of Vocations. This would show the rest of the church that we can do imaginative work, and it would set the patterns ready for the new jurisdiction. To show we are serious, the first appointment should not be a priest; and if possible, it should be someone who could join the existing Church House team of Selection Secretaries. A bit of plotting and planning will be necessary.

The women question

Are there to be women deacons in the new province?

The issue of women's vocations is a serious one. However, FiF and the PEVs must initially face the more immediate issue of women deacons. We recognize that (a) most would rather not do so, and (b) opposition to and antagonism towards women deacons has increased within the constituency, not decreased, since 1992.

It may be that women deacons are not to be part of the new jurisdiction, but it is crucial that this issue is resolved openly and honestly, so that we can consider the wider question, 'To what ministries will God call women in the new province?'

Dodging the issue of women deacons in order to keep the peace is most unwise: it plays into the hands of all those who suspect we are no more than a cover organization for misogyny. The issue is not about the existing women deacons (few in number) but the future integrity of those who foster vocations, and the coherence of their programme.

Shared institutions

As a continuing part of the Church of England, it is important that we share many of the existing structures of Canterbury and York.

We recognize that this will raise real challenges, when it is precisely over the nature of the sacred ministry that the split will have occurred. However, part of the purpose of any new jurisdiction is to remain within the CoFE and not to set up the structures for a continuing church; if that had been the intention, we could have done it years ago. We should not, therefore, re-create what already exists; this would only waste time, energy and money.

We should continue to use, work with and hopefully contribute to Ministry Division for much of the necessary regulation, discernment, and so on. We would send our candidates to at least some of the same theological colleges and courses, relying on our own (scaled-down) version of the Archbishops' Inspections to ensure they provide what we required.

The most difficult task in such shared arrangements will be the sustaining of our own enquirers and candidates over a number of years in a possibly hostile environment: we will clearly have to provide some of our own teaching and formation over and above the shared provision. The advantage is that we would not have to create entirely separate structures, and that we could have an influence upon the rest of the CoFE.

This has important evangelistic implications. Recognizing that we will not get all our vocations to the priesthood from within our own constituency alone, we will be relying on, and tested by, our ability to persuade others in the two existing provinces, who are as yet unaware of our convictions. This has already occurred, and by God's grace will continue to do so.

The religious life

We must take the religious life more seriously than we have done in the recent past.

We are keen to establish the importance of the religious life within any new province, and therefore the serious consideration of the religious life at every stage of fostering and discerning vocations. Despite the fact that such vocations are more specific (to a particular community) than, say, the priesthood, they should be encouraged as a matter of course. Some of this work will fall to RooT (Religious of orthodox Tradition), but much of it must also be shared by those with direct responsibility for vocations.

The Catholic wing often pays lip service to the religious communities, but they are rarely in the forefront of thinking or planning, in teaching material about the faith, or in the presentation of options