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Mary in Scripture

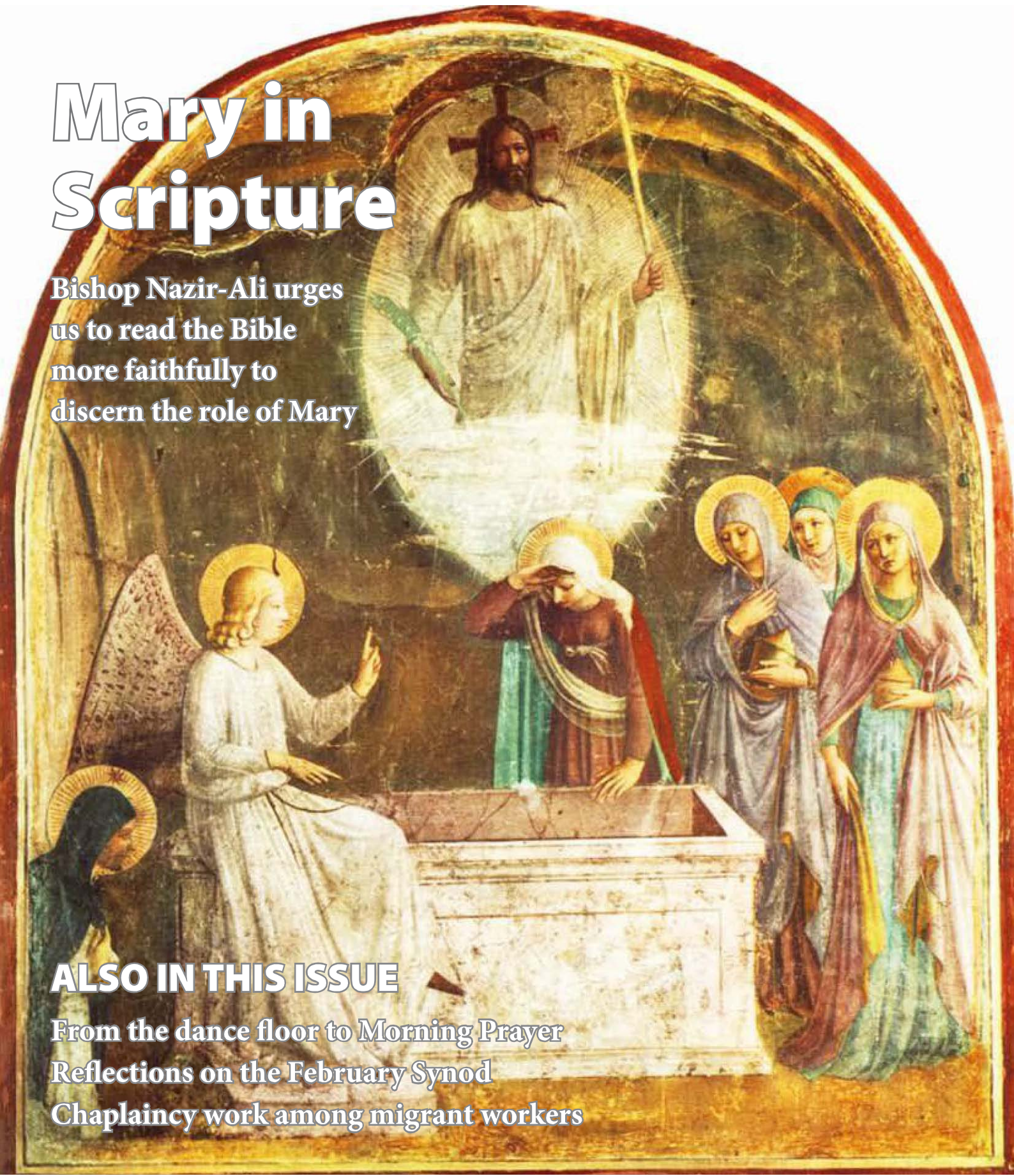
**Bishop Nazir-Ali urges
us to read the Bible
more faithfully to
discern the role of Mary**

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is published on 4 May

Fifteen months after Civil Partnerships became law, the first figures are out in the public domain. And we can answer the question: is the proportion of Church of England clergy in a CP higher or lower than that of the English population at large? After the tenor of the recent Synod debate, one might be surprised to learn that proportionally CPs are ten times more popular among CofE clergy than among the ordinary populace. Ten times. This is an impressive figure. And surprisingly encouraging.

That single clergy are taking advantage of the provision of the law to establish mutual support with a friend, in terms of pensions, inheritance tax, and so on, is a sign of care and responsibility. The 2004 Act says absolutely nothing *explicitly* about sexual activity in a civil partnership. There is no reason (other than interference by gay activists) for the church to be bothered about them one way or the other, so long as it maintains its adherence to scriptural teaching (for heterosexuals every bit as much as for homosexuals).

What the Act does instead is create a climate *implicitly* by the complexity of its provisions. Is it this fundamental dishonesty that has been so consistently condemned by NEW DIRECTIONS. It is the government and not individuals who must receive the condemnation. Sadly too much of church discussion, in General Synod or among members of the House of Bishops, diverts attention towards the private life of individuals and thus colludes with the government's subterfuge.

A similar dishonesty with the Sexual Orientation Regulations also threatens the integrity of the church. There is no Christian foundation for discrimination against anyone on the basis of their sexual orientation, but this is not what these regulations are about. Without proper parliamentary debate, without a published Bill, without open consultation, a collection of implicitly dishonest regulations is being cobbled together by a Minister just in time to become the law of the land this month.

If tolerance is to be legislated out of existence, that is a serious step. In such a context, the present process of ill-thought-out *fiat* is utterly shabby and totally disgraceful. But we must remember that it is the government and not individuals who stand condemned.



As the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church began its meeting in Texas to discuss the Dar es Salaam Communiqué of the Primates of the Anglican Communion, it was revealed that Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori had accepted and

acted upon the advice of her Chancellor, to veto the election of the Revd Mark Lawrence as Bishop of South Carolina. The reason stated for this action – the first of its kind for over seventy years – was irregularity in the form of consents given, some of which had been received electronically and therefore without the signatures required by Canon.

Reaction to the veto has been predictably sharp. Fr Lawrence himself, in an interview for a Washington DC newspaper summed up the views of many: 'A curtain has been drawn back on the stage of the Episcopal Church,' he said, 'and everyone can now look into what I would call the theatre of the absurd – that those of us who uphold the trustworthiness of Scripture and the traditional teachings of the Church are repeatedly put in a position of having to justify our beliefs.'

In our view the course of action for the diocese of South Carolina is clear. They must re-elect Fr Lawrence and submit his name once again to the bishops and standing committees whose approval is required. One of the strongest arguments for the confirmation of the election of Gene Robinson to the diocese of New Hampshire was that the diocese had a right to the bishop it had chosen. If the polity of The Episcopal Church supports that argument (which effectively renders the process of gaining consents superfluous) then it must apply as well in South Carolina as in New Hampshire; as well for traditionalists as for revisionists.

Failure to confirm Fr Lawrence's election a second time would surely be a significant moment for American Anglicanism. In the eyes of the Communion the determination of its liberal majority to persecute and outlaw those in disagreement with it would have been highlighted in a dramatic way. The House of Bishops has already rejected the proposals of the Primates for a Pastoral Council and Primatial Vicar to care for parishes and dioceses disaffected by prevailing attitudes on human sexuality – proposals which in essence originated in the American Church itself. To deny an orthodox diocese the right to the ministry of a bishop of its own choosing, sharing its own theological stance, would be to declare open war on all those who dissent from decisions of the General Convention.

The Episcopal Church is, in origins and constitution, a federation of dioceses, which are themselves federations of parishes. However unsatisfactory this may be in terms of Catholic ecclesiology, it is an undeniable historical fact.

The Episcopal Church is much given to proclaiming its own 'graciousness'. It needs to demonstrate by its actions that those are not empty words. **ND**



Evangelical Mary

The Rt Revd Michael Nazir-Ali commends the recent ARCIC report and urges us all to read the Scriptures more carefully as we seek to discover the unique role of Mary in the incarnation of the Son

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There is a difference in culture in the two Churches in how we approach the Blessed Virgin Mary. And this difference in culture may also be a difference in theological culture. From the earliest days of the Christian Church there had been two ‘tempers’, one associated with *Alexandria* which is speculative and dogmatic, and one associated with *Antioch* which is historical and biblical, and inductive rather than deductive. If you wanted a crude guess about where I think the Roman Catholic Church’s approach is, I would say that it is much more Alexandrian, particularly in its relation to Mary, and the dogmas and beliefs about Mary which have been developed over the years. Whereas the Anglican approach, even that of the Caroline divines and the Non-Jurors, has been more inductive; biblical, historical and patristic. We are discovering more and more that each approach can enrich the other. But it is worth recognizing the difference.

Since the second Vatican Council the Roman Catholic Church has shown a welcome tendency in all of its pronouncements to examine first the biblical background to any particular doctrine. And so we found it easy in ARCIC to consider, first of all, ‘Mary and the Bible’. Pretty straightforward? Actually it raises all sorts of questions about how we read the Bible. Many of the reformers were critical of ways of reading it that had developed in the middle ages: the allegory and even the typography had got so florid you could make any part of the Bible mean anything at all. The Reformers were calling the Church back to a historical and literary seriousness, and the Anglican side were well aware of this. So we were delighted that the Roman Catholics also wanted to begin with the Bible and with some discussion about how typology, for example, could validly be used.

Of course, with the Older Testament, we must use typology with regard to Mary, as with Jesus. Anglicans sometimes sing Bishop Thomas Ken’s hymn *Her virgin eyes saw God incarnate born*, which compares Mary to Eve. What was said about Eve in Genesis 3.15, about her offspring crushing the serpent’s head, must apply in any kind of typological approach to the Blessed Virgin Mary. So not all allegory and typology is wrong and having got rid of the excesses we can now see where, from the Older Testament, we can validly talk of Mary.

When we came to the New Testament we were faced immediately with the question of how to treat the birth narratives. In both communions there is a spectrum of opinion in this matter. We felt that behind the two very different birth narratives there stands a common tradition that there was something highly unusual about the birth of Jesus. Beyond the narratives themselves, in Mark for instance, Jesus is described as the ‘son of Mary’; in John when there is a discussion between Jesus and some of the Jewish

people, they tell him, ‘we were not born of fornication’ and then, St Paul in Galatians speaks of the Saviour being ‘born of a woman’.

Staying with the birth narratives for the time being, I think the integrity of the tradition is shown by their differences. Although we conflate them at Christmas (and confuse everybody) they are different stories with different settings and different personae. So Joseph plays a major role in the Matthean narrative but not in the Lucan one. You have the magi in Matthew and the shepherds in Luke and so on. Positively in Matthew, we have this constant repetition of the ‘Mother and the Child’, never the one without the other, and this has been picked up in Christian iconography.

In Luke, we have first of all the Annunciation: *Ave Maria gratia plena*. The reformers did not like this, it seemed to be claiming too much of Mary and so the early English translations, including the King James version, tended to translate this as ‘Hail Mary thou who art highly favoured’ or some such phrase. Actually the word used, *kecharitōmenē*, means the one who has been fully endowed with grace. So *Ave Maria gratia plena* is correct, or more correct than somebody highly favoured, whatever that might mean, as long as it is understood that God endowed her with grace.

All sorts of questions arise about this. If Mary is so fully endowed with grace, how far back does that endowment go? Was it at the time when the angel came to see her? A little bit earlier? How much earlier? Right back to the beginning? And what was the beginning anyway? There has been fierce debate in the Church for centuries about this. There are, of course, other persons in the Bible about whom it is said that ‘God had been preparing them for his calling from the very beginning of their lives.’ Jeremiah. Samson, if you mean in the way that Samson was born. John the Baptist. St Paul himself says this about his own preparation for his calling.

So *Ave Maria gratia plena* is correct, or more correct than somebody highly favoured, whatever that might mean, as long as it is understood that God endowed her with grace. There is no reason for us to want to deny such preparation of Mary from the beginning, especially because of what is said at the time of the Annunciation. And, indeed, that is the line that we have taken in *Mary, Grace and Hope in the Church*, that we cannot set limits to when God began to prepare Mary. It must have been from the beginning and even before the beginning in divine providence and wisdom.

We decided to say that the Virgin Birth, conception and birth, are important because they are about the new thing that God was about to do in the Incarnation of Our Lord. Here was something quite new which God was about to do and, in fact, if you read the narratives both Lucan and Matthean, you find that there is both continuity and newness.

The evangelists keep a balance, so the genealogies in both point to the continuity of David's line, of being part of the story of Israel, but the newness is concentrated in God being the chief agent in the work of the Incarnation.

But Luke has so much else about him. Of course, there is the Visitation to Elizabeth and Elizabeth's cry when she sees Mary and recognizes her blessing. Mary, herself, speaks of this in the Magnificat, and at Evening song every day we recognize that ever blessedness of Mary first seen by Elizabeth. Luke is also conscious that Mary was reflecting on what was happening and it may be that a lot of what we know about the birth narratives somehow comes from Mary's reflection. In this sense Mary is also the first theologian, if you like, not just the first Christian but the first theologian who was thinking about the things that God was doing with her and for her and in her.

Then there is John's gospel and in the report we consider the two events in which Mary is present, Cana and Calvary. At Cana she seems to be there in her own right, Jesus arriving afterwards with the disciples. She says to Jesus 'there is no wine' and then there is that dialogue you know where he says 'my time has not yet come' but then Mary says to the stewards 'do as he tells you' and they do and you know what happens. But then there is something very telling at the end of it all where it says that Mary, now goes down with Jesus and the disciples back to Capernaum. She is seen for the first time as part of the company of disciples.

And, then, there is Mary at the Cross and the tremendous amount of reflection there has been on the Mother being handed over to the care of the beloved disciple and the beloved disciple to the mother. What are the theological implications of this relationship? Language about Mary being Mother of the Church can be based also on the perception that the Church is the Body of Christ, but the story about the disciple and Mary is a nice way of thinking of Mary's motherhood for those who are disciples of Christ.

Just as in John she is with Jesus and the disciples, so also in Acts at the time of the Pentecost, Mary is there with the disciples. We also considered the figure of the woman in the apocalypse in Revelation ch. 12 and its relevance for Mary. Generally speaking this imagery has been thought to be of God's people primarily rather than of Mary, but there have been some Fathers, like Epiphanius, who have thought that it could refer to Mary as well as the Church, so this might be another way of thinking of Mary as a type for the Church. It is difficult if one reads ch. 12, not to think of this if one were fair minded, for clearly the child is the Messiah.

Having examined the Bible we then looked at the early Church and we discovered two main concerns that involve Mary. The first typified by Ignatius of Antioch is that Mary is necessary for the Incarnation. To believe that Jesus was truly man you must take seriously the figure of Mary. Jesus was not just someone who appeared to be a man and so Ignatius in his letter to the Ephesians (interestingly enough they must have known quite a lot about it if Mary had lived among them) tells us that Jesus is both God and man both eternally begotten of the Father and born of Mary. Mary's virginity, along with the birth of Jesus

and the Cross, are seen by him as the three great mysteries of the Christian Faith.

The other concern in the Early Church was of the unity of the two natures of Christ, that he was both human and divine. This is shown in the ascription of the title *Theotokos* or God-bearer, or *Deipara* to use the old Latin word, of Mary. Mary is God-bearer because the human and the divine are united in the one Christ and this is why what we say of the human is also true of the divine, and vice versa. This description of Mary as *Theotokos* became really quite central, not so much about Mary, but about Jesus and who he is.

As you know, through the Middle Ages there were all sorts of developments about belief regarding Mary. Some of them were faithful to the Bible and to the Fathers and some were not. Devotion to Mary got detached from thinking about Christ. Mary could become someone who dispensed grace in her own right, to whom people could pray in her own right, and so forth. At the Reformation the protests that took place were about these excesses – to give an example, Bonaventura, where he substituted Our Lady for every reference to God in the Psalms. Tyndale was particularly vicious about this kind of thing, whatever the intention might have been. But it was not just the Reformers. Erasmus and St Thomas More who both remained in communion with Rome were also critical of the cults that had arisen about the Blessed Virgin Mary. If you read More about Walsingham and Ipswich, it is difficult to tell whether it is Thomas More or William Tyndale! His point is that people have made the cults and the places and the shrines and the statues and the 'stocks' as he calls them, a substitute for Christ and for his Mother. Erasmus, after he visited Walsingham, was equally critical. So the Reformers were not alone. I mean that there was awareness that the cults had become excessive on both sides.

However, what we are perhaps not so familiar with is the extent to which there was continuity among even the most radical reformers. So, for example, Hugh Latimer, one of the most outspoken of the Reformers, said when asked about Mary, 'I go not about to make Mary a sinner but Christ her saviour.' And funnily enough many centuries later that is exactly what the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception does; it pleads the merits of Christ saving work for the preservation of Mary from sin.

Thomas Cranmer, and many other Reformers, take their stand on the sinlessness of Mary on the basis of what Augustine had said. But there is more than that and this is shown in the liturgy, in the Christmas Collect and the Christmas Preface, Mary is referred to as 'a pure Virgin.' What does that mean? It is not the technical language of the Immaculate Conception but there is this sense that she is somehow free from sin.

There was widespread recognition of her sinlessness among the Anglican Reformers and in the early catechisms, for example in Nowell's *Catechism* and Thomas Becon and so on. They are almost unanimous about perpetual virginity. The reason that they give very often is the verse in Ezekiel ch. 44, which says 'the gates from which the Lord has come no man should enter.' This is their reasoning for the perpetual virginity of Mary but also, of course, the nearly unanimous testimony of the Church. Even Jewel who

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knows that there was some dissent about this in the patristic period is happy to affirm the perpetual virginity of Mary. This is the case in the sixteenth century when so much was being overthrown and rejected. Nor should we neglect the liturgical and other aspects that were retained. For example, although in 1552 only two feasts having to do with Mary were retained, the Purification and the Annunciation, in 1561 three further feasts were recognized, the Conception, the Nativity and the Visitation.

When we come to our own day, the most significant thing for us as a Commission was that the Second Vatican Council decided not to issue a separate document on Mary but to subsume what they had to teach about Mary in their document on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. This showed that they wanted to go back to the earliest insight of Mary being with the disciples rather than Mary being enthroned, as it were above the Church. They wished to see Mary in the midst of the Church. And this has signalled a new interest in the Roman Catholic Church in the historical, in the

patristic situation, which, as Anglicans of course, we welcome very much and so there was a sort of meeting of minds in these areas.

What then can we say together so far? We can say that Mary is the recipient of divine grace not the originator of it; that whatever role Mary has it should not

mously complex and there are not only many Fathers but also many medieval scholars and saints who did not believe, for example, in the Immaculate Conception. Irenaeus, Augustine himself, Chrysostom and Aquinas. But I think that the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was an attempt by the Roman Catholic Church to foreclose discussion on what it might mean; in that sense it was an unfortunate step because the language used is that of nineteenth century Rome, and hardly understandable today and sometimes embarrassing even to Roman Catholics. However, what we can say about Mary is that she was a pure virgin; that she was

prepared by God from the very beginning in what she had to do. If, for some, that means 'Immaculate Conception' then that is their language. Similarly with the Assumption, notwithstanding the particular language of the dogma, we can say surely that Mary reigns with Christ in glory. With Bishop Ken we can say, 'Heaven with transcendent joys her entrance graced, Next to his throne her Son his Mother placed.' **ND**

what we can say about Mary is that she was a pure virgin, that she was prepared by God from the very beginning in what she had to do: if for some that means Immaculate Conception then that is their language

distract from the centrality of Christ's person and work in the Church and in the world; that Mary was prepared by the divine grace from the beginning for the work to which she had been called; in the light of Revelations¹², for example, that Mary can be spoken of as in glory with her son.

These things we can say together, but what about the dogmas? Where are we on that? The story of the dogmas is enor-

A library of books has been written about the disciplines and practices associated with the penitential seasons of Advent and Christmas. I don't think I have ever seen or heard of a book about the practical issues involved in keeping the great feasts of the Christian liturgical year. There is a profound irony in the general scheme of things: every exhortation is made for people to pray more, study more, give more in Lent and Advent and then, once the holidays begin everything stops and often the clergy have a break! The forty days from Christmas day until Candlemass and the forty days from Easter Day until Ascension Day mirror the penitential seasons of the year. It is important that these six-week periods are given equal, if different, attention as to how they are kept.

First, it is important to keep the feast days and their attendant holidays in a good style. The central part that eating and drinking have in the celebrations are not anti-Christian. In fact, Christians of all people should enjoy their turkey and stuffing at Christmas and their roast lamb at Easter! The centrality of table fellowship in the life of the Church cannot be overestimated. There is a reminder here of the early church as

Ghostly Counsel Feasting

Andy Hawes is Warden of Edenham Regional Retreat House

recounted in Acts; 'they gathered in each other's homes and shared their food with unaffected joy.' Hospitality and feasting go together. These great festivals call for a party, for gathering people together and sharing good things.

This is not practical for some but other readers will have a great gift and capacity for hospitality, and the festivals are a time to give it a free rein. Easter and Christmas provide ample opportunities to bring the celebration of the Faith not only into the kitchen but into the rest of the home. An Easter Garden can mirror the Christmas Crib, the Christmas cards by Easter ones. In our home we always have an 'Easter Tree' dressed in lights with ceramic eggs for decoration!

There is, of course, a different spiritual

mood, in the worship of the church and this should be relished with joy and thanksgiving. No one receives a gift at Christmas and then puts it away immediately and perhaps forgets all about it. But, this is what happens in the lives of so many Christians. The festival arrives with great celebration and then the possibilities it provides for deepening faith and fellowship are ignored. It is just as important to make a rule for regular Communion in the seasons of Easter and Christmas, as it is for Lent and Advent. In the same way there are some wonderful books and study guides for the penitential seasons and hardly anything readily available for Easter (Christmas, of course, has a rich poetic tradition). Ask around, have a good look in the library for something to carry your thoughts and prayers into Pentecost: it is the perfect time to read an inspirational biography or a book on prayer. There are several readable books with the theme of 'Resurrection'.

The most important discipline is to be thankful. Take the duty and joy of thanksgiving seriously. Bend your will to it with the same energy as you gave to your Lenten disciplines. Let the sound of 'Alleluia' in your heart give hopeful balance to the Kyries of Lent.

A very English Synod

Simon Killwick, newly elected Chairman of the Catholic Group in General Synod reflects on the February debates at Westminster on pensions, homosexuality, civil partnerships and common tenure

General Synod sometimes reminds me of a gentlemanly game of cricket. Every speaker in a debate can expect to receive some applause, even from those who disagree with what the speaker has said; if you are bowled out, you lose your amendment, but you will still be applauded as you walk off the pitch. (Rather different from those walks of shame on reality television.) But, beware: as in my imagined old-fashioned game of cricket, the leisurely pace and general good humour of the game do not rule out the use of skilful and forceful tactics.

A typical debate

Let us take this February's debate on the Future of Clergy Pensions as an example. The good news for clergy is that the present pension scheme will remain substantially the same as it is now; the bad news is that it is proposed that the annual increase in pensions will no longer follow the annual increase in stipends as in the past, but will instead match increases in the Retail Price Index, and only up to a maximum of 3.5%.

Three amendments were proposed by members: (1) Canon John Ashe proposed an amendment to retain the link between pension and stipend increases; (2) the Bishop of Worcester proposed an amendment to keep the link for all past service; (3) I proposed an amendment for pension increases to match RPI up to 5%. All the amendments were heard and received warm applause, and support from other speakers – the tide seemed to be running in favour of Canon Ashe's amendment. Then the big guns were wheeled out by the establishment (you always know that they are worried when this happens).

First, the Chairman of the Archbishops' Council Finance Division, then the Chairman of Pensions Board, followed by the Archbishop of York warned in solemn tones of the financial Armageddon that would be unleashed on the church if the amendments were passed. The mood of the Synod changed dramatically, and the amendments which had looked like runners earlier in the debate were defeated. The movers of the amendments were congratulated afterwards by the others, even from the platform – we

were all such good sports!

General Synod is not always so gentlemanly, and I have witnessed members being shouted at in the corridors for having the temerity to disagree with establishment policy, on the ownership of parsonage houses, for example. I have also witnessed the reception of a few speakers by a stony silence, instead of the customary applause; those few speakers received in silence are usually traditionalists of one kind or another.

Private members' motions

After two years of Synod meetings which have been intensely stressful because something to do with women bishops has been on every agenda, I was looking forward to a more relaxing Synod this February, now that the women bishops issue has been referred to the legislative drafting group. How wrong I was! Almost the whole of the Wednesday was devoted to two private members' motions to do with homosexuality.

The Synod's standing orders allow individual members to put forward motions for consideration; the motions are published and other members sign them if they want to see them debated. Generally no private member's motion (PMM) will be debated unless it attracts at least a hundred signatures.

Usually the PMM with the most signatures is the one that will be debated at each group of sessions of the Synod.

There is a kind of set format whereby the proposer of the motion is allowed to circulate a briefing paper to the whole Synod, and a synodical board or committee will circulate another 'official' briefing paper. When the motion comes to be debated, around one hour is allocated, and an 'official' amendment is proposed, often by a bishop or senior figure, which usually renders the original PMM almost unrecognizable, apart from being on the same subject. Supporters of the original motion may try to amend the official amendment to make the motion read more like the original; opponents of the original motion may then try to amend those amendments to make it less like the original. This is a well-established Synod sport!

Two PMMs were floated in February 2006, relating to homosexuality, but approaching it from opposing viewpoints. Both attracted over a hundred signatures, and the powers that be decided it would be only be fair for them both to be debated at the same sessions of Synod (good cricket, again), and on the same day; so we had 'Lesbian and Gay Christians' in the morning, and 'Civil Partnerships' in the afternoon, separated by some tedious legislative business, lunch and a report on electronic voting. Unusually, the debate on each of these PMMs was allowed to run for over two hours; otherwise they followed the set format for such motions.



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Forewords by the Bishop of Ebbsfleet & Fr Aidan Nichols OP

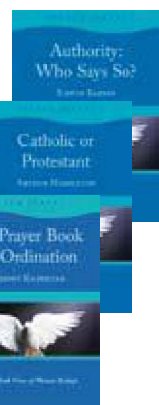
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The morning motion, proposed by the Revd Mary Gilbert, was ostensibly about agreeing that homosexual orientation was in itself no bar to a faithful Christian life, welcoming and affirming lesbian and gay Christians, and listening to their experience (as requested by the 1998 Lambeth Conference in its resolution 1.10).

Discussing homosexuality

Some of us were concerned that the introductory section of the motion referred to 'divergent opinions coming from honest and legitimate attempts to read the Scriptures', whereas the issue is really about *what* are legitimate readings of the Scriptures in this area. The 'official' amendment from the Bishop of Gloucester took the phrase out, together with most of the rest of the motion.

The bishop's amendment was amended in turn to restore the aspect of listening to the experience of lesbian and gay Christians. The Synod listened sympathetically to the experience of some lesbian and gay Christians in the course of the debate. At an earlier stage, Synod also heard Professor Anthony Thiselton speaking about the consensus of current biblical scholarship, which is overwhelmingly in favour of the traditional reading of Scripture on homosexuality.

My own impression was that the Synod was more open to the experience of lesbian and gay Christians in this debate than it was to the traditional reading of Scripture. The final wording of the motion recognized the Church of England's commitment to the Lambeth Conference resolutions on human sexuality, which maintain the traditional teaching of the Church and the Bible, while encouraging a process of listening to lesbian and gay Christians.

Civil partnerships

After lunch, and the report on electronic voting, we came to the second PMM, from the Revd Paul Perkin, a conservative evangelical, on 'Civil Partnerships'. It was a strongly worded motion, stating that civil partnerships 'would be inconsistent with Christian teaching', and questioning the House of Bishops' Pastoral Statement on civil partnerships. The debate was more tense than the morning, and members seemed tired of having much the same subject as the morning debate, with many of the same people speaking.

The 'official' amendment, proposed by the Bishop of Liverpool, rendered the original motion unrecognizable. Both sides tried to amend the official amendment, with the bizarre result that they united in not wishing to recognize the Bishops' Pastoral Statement as a 'balanced and faithful attempt faithfully to apply the Church's teaching to civil partnerships' – this apparent rejection of the Bishops' Pastoral Statement was the headline in all the national newspapers that reported the debate.

Common Tenure

A major change to Clergy Terms and Conditions of Service was brought before the Synod in the form of draft legislation. Draft legislation is introduced in the Synod under a set procedure, whereby it is first considered for referral to a revision committee. No amendments can be proposed unless or until it reaches the revision committee stage, although concerns can be expressed in the initial debate.

The proposals started as a way of giving security of tenure to priests-in-charge, under pressure from the government; they then became a way of also abolishing the freehold of incumbents and putting

all clergy under Common Tenure. However, Common Tenure will not be quite as common as it seems: some appointments would still be short-term or time-limited (a bit like present priests-in-charge), while others would be permanent (a bit like present freehold).

Apart from the issue of whether parsonage houses should be owned by the incumbent in trust, or by the diocesan parsonages board, there was concern expressed about clergy being micro-managed through regulations and a system of annual review. There was also concern about the proposed introduction of a capability procedure, whereby clergy can be removed from office for not fulfilling their duties to minimum acceptable standards, even if they have not committed any disciplinary offence.

The Synod agreed to refer the draft legislation to a revision committee, which means that everyone who has concerns can write in and suggest amendments; the draft legislation will then come back to the Synod, probably in a revised form for further consideration.

Range of issues

The Synod discussed a range of other subjects including Education, Trident and Media Standards. Members of the Catholic Group in General Synod played a part in all the debates, which is as it should be. The Catholic faith is about the whole of life, not just what happens in church; we are certainly not a single-issue group, only concerned about the ordination of women, vital though that issue is.

In a few years' time, there will be elections to the General Synod, and we will need a good number of candidates to stand for election – perhaps this might include you! **ND**

To the point

We live in a small country parish that finds it difficult to raise funds to maintain our large medieval church. At a recent PCC meeting a member said the pop star who has recently bought the manor house next to the church might be liable to contribute to the costs. Another member thought that the Cambridge college that owns all the farmland in the village was liable to contribute. A third person thought that Lady Agatha Thurible, the patron of the living who lives in London, must pay. Who is correct?

Historically, some people have had the responsibility of paying for the

upkeep, not of the whole church, only the chancel, that responsibility arising from ownership of certain land. It has been estimated that about 5,200 churches (mostly rural and pre-Reformation) benefit from it, and that over 3.5 million acres of land are involved in England alone.

Since the pop star and Cambridge college both own land it is possible that either or both may be liable to contribute. Lady Agatha, as patron of the living, has important rights in connection with the appointment of an incumbent, but unless she owns land with a liability for chancel repairs she cannot be made to pay.

It would be a matter of complex

legal and historical research to find out whether your church benefits from chancel repair liability. The land does not necessarily need to be anywhere near the church and the rights and responsibilities do not only arise in the case of country churches.

However, liability for chancel repair may be lost for ever unless an appropriate entry is made with the Land Registry by 13 October 2013. It is important, therefore, that parishes which benefit from chancel repair liability take appropriate steps to protect their interests. They should consult their archdeacon or diocesan registrar as a first step.

III Who pays?

Migrant workers here

David de Verney offers a brief sketch of a new type of church ministry among the migrant workers from Eastern Europe with the difficulties and challenges it presents

I took up my post as the new Chaplain for Migrant Workers and New Arrival Communities in Southeast Lincolnshire in January 2006. About one tenth of our county's population are migrant workers. The original 'first wave' of guest workers arrived about eight or ten years ago mainly from Portugal and have been established here ever since. Most are fairly settled, are beginning to enter the housing market as buyers and have children in primary and secondary schools. Some have even started to return to Portugal.

With the arrival of other newcomers from the Eastern European New Accession States like Poland and Lithuania, the ethnic, professional and social mix of the area began to change more rapidly. Many Eastern European guest workers are well-educated, single and very competitive in their professional outlook. This can lead to tensions within the New Arrival Communities. While the Portuguese workers and their families are largely un-churched and have no unifying markers apart from their nationality and language, the Eastern European workers, especially those from Poland, are as a majority loyal Catholics and congregate both socially and in religious terms around the local Catholic churches.

Isolation of new communities

My own work with New Arrival Communities falls mainly in four different categories. Most of my time is taken up with advocacy and liaison. I am working closely with the Community and Diversity teams of the Southern and Eastern divisions of Lincolnshire Constabulary. We have almost weekly meetings, monitoring anything from incidents of hate crimes to road safety procedures. Most foreign workers are too scared to report hate crimes or violations of their employment rights because of well-founded fears of retribution by their gangmaster.

Another important link in my work is the collaboration with local Citizens Advice Bureaux, which are doing invaluable work with free employment advice and monitoring of gangmaster activities. I also meet almost weekly with officers of both Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council, especially with regard to housing and homelessness issues. In Boston, half of all homeless people are migrant workers, mainly because they have been thrown out by their gangmasters who are also their landlords. Few workers have a rent book or rental contract.

When seasonal work in the fields and packing factories dries up, many workers not only lose their jobs but also their accommodation in houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) and are forced to sleep in derelict buildings, parks, old cars or in bushes along the river Witham. The only two night shelters in this county are in Lincoln and Skegness. With others, I am involved in trying to provide a night shelter for Boston and Spalding. We have not been successful so far because the local Council refuses to support the day centre for the homeless in Boston with more than £5,500 per year, although they are given £40,000 a year by central government to combat homelessness.

Little extra funding

GP practices and local hospitals do not get extra funding either to deal with the increase in user numbers; in particular, A&E and maternity wards suffer from under-funding. In addition,

personnel are not trained to deal with non-English speaking patients and different cultural conditions. With the Chief Chaplain for the NHS hospitals in Lincolnshire, I have been involved in a teaching programme for NHS staff in multi-culturalism and multi-faith issues. I regularly encounter racial prejudice.

I have become involved in the training of two dozen interpreters for face to face translations – a service desperately needed here and elsewhere. Until now children or neighbours had to translate in often difficult and confidential circumstances. I trained with the first batch of translators to get an insight into the challenges involved. This work is now expanding into other parts of the county.

As more and more children of migrant worker families enter the school system, an increased demand for specialized support has arisen. Because of limited resources from the County Council, EMAS (Ethnic Minorities Achievement Services) struggle to find enough qualified personnel teaching in the children's native languages. Funding for this vital service is woefully inadequate. As a former teacher, I know this problem well. I have been privileged to help three teachers from Poland, who were working in the fields around Boston, to be recognized as qualified teachers by the Department of Education. The standard of education among the Eastern European workers is generally high, 50% have A levels or even higher degrees.

The gangmasters

During my work in the last year, I have come across several so-called 'gangmasters' or 'labour providers'. Some try to do the right thing, most do not. I have started an open dialogue with those labour providers who wish to talk to me. Another part of my work is the dialogue with farmers, packing factories and supermarkets. I am just beginning to visit offices and factories and to learn about the difficulties this sector of the migrant-worker-dependent-economy is experiencing.

And what of the Christian communities? Sadly, many Christians do not know or do not want to know about the plight of foreign workers in our midst. Exploitation and abuse of foreigners is an evil that does not only happen through gangmasters and unscrupulous employers but also in the streets and shops of our towns and villages. Foreigners are being badly treated and discriminated against by our fellow citizens.

Often, Christians need educating and re-acquainting with Gospel values. For this reason I seek and accept preaching engagements in churches and chapels of all denominations in Lincolnshire. I run workshops in church halls, schools and old peoples' homes. I give assemblies in schools and talk to youth clubs and deanery synods. Most are eager to learn about the plight of those who provide, by their labour in our fields, the fruit and vegetables we take for granted. The Mothers' Union has started a series of 'Meet the Foreign Workers' workshops, which enable members to actually talk to foreign workers face to face and hear first-hand about their lives among us.

Many Christians are keen to pray, and many are willing to lobby politicians, supermarkets and 'labour providers' to help change the way our food is sourced. If we support Fair Trade with foreign countries, would it not be time to start demanding fair trade in our own? **ND**

Watch the money

Luke Pacioli takes us through some of the intricacies of diocesan accounting to reveal how weak are the supposed safe-guards which General Synod wishes to put in place with regard to parsonages

I thank God we haven't talked about money. We should be about the love of God and mission. We should trust each other.' So began one maiden speech at our diocesan synod. The draftsmen of the 1983 Pastoral Measure (as amended) perhaps took a less Pollyanna-ish, more Augustine (late period) view of the workings of the senior workers in the Lord's vineyard, and their legislation for parsonages which have become redundant or sold off has the reputation for being fiercely ring-fenced. But, as Gordon Brown could tell you, legislation designed to make people play fair with money merely encourages people to find ways around the law.

Diocesan accounts

Since it is now proposed that parsonages should be put in trust with Diocesan Boards of Finance (DBF) and one of the arguments is that this will not harm parishes, because the parsonages and monies arising from their sale are ring-fenced, it seemed worthwhile exploring whether Church Commissioners' ring-fencing is any more effective than the Maginot Line. Ingenious readers of *NEW DIRECTIONS* may be encouraged by what follows to think up their own schemes; wily diocesan treasurers may laugh at the simplicity and ignorance.

Since 1995, parsonages have been included in diocesan accounts, generally with a note stating that that the parsonage can only be sold when there is no incumbent, or when the priest in charge is moved to a different property. This is based on an understanding of the Charities Act 1993 as interpreted by Financial Reporting Standard 15.

Restricted income?

Financial statements are designed to do no more than reflect as far as possible the legal situation, and the legal situation of parsonages is complex. Arguments could have been made for parsonages to be included in parish accounts; after all, that is where the asset is used, and the current treatment suggests that the default setting for the parish is that it has no priest. But then what would diocesan accounts look like without parsonages?

However, the inclusion of parson-

ages in diocesan accounts does not give dioceses the right to sell them and use the proceeds willy nilly. Under the 1983 Pastoral Measure (as amended), there are limits on what can be done with parsonages transferred to a DBF, just as there are limits to what can be done with glebe.

At one level, those strict limits are irrelevant. When the DBF takes over a parsonage or glebe, that should give rise to income which, at least for glebe, is

when a diocese sells a parsonage, the benefit need not flow through directly to the parishes

intended to be spent on stipends or parsonages – it is restricted income. But stipends are the largest cost in any diocese, and parsonages often come second. If the income from the (restricted) stipends account is increased, this will usually mean that an equivalent income from the quota need no longer be put to stipends (this presumes that the amount of quota is stable). And quota money which no longer goes on stipends can go anywhere. So, unless the stipend/parsonage cost falls considerably, when a diocese sells a parsonage the benefit need not flow through to the parishes. Indeed, there may be an extra saving with the reduction in payroll with one less minister, thus freeing up even more of the quota.

Unfortunately, the sums involved, say £30k p.a. from the reduction in posts and another £30k as the annual return on the sale of a £500k parsonage, though not small, are not enough to fund serious fresh expressions or *grands projets*. To do this needs more income, and, above all, capital.

But it is 'releasing' the capital value of parsonages which is precisely what we might expect the rules are designed to prevent. Under the Measure, when a parsonage is transferred to a DBF under a pastoral scheme (at this point the provisions are essentially the same under the Endowments and Glebe Measure, 1976), the assets are to be allocated to the dioc-

esan stipends capital account or the diocesan pastoral account, though the first call on funds is to a replacement parsonage, if necessary.

Lack of regulation

The stipends account is basically legislated for in the Diocesan Stipends Funds Measure 1953 (one of the first pieces of legislation passed by Her Majesty). This established capital and income accounts for the fund, the allocation of assets between them, and the transfer of assets between them being at the discretion of bishop and DBF unless expressly stipulated by any donor. Assets in the capital account can be used to purchase investments or improve investment property or glebe (what kind of property is your Diocesan Office?). Income arising in the income account may be used for stipends or the maintenance of parsonages. Hence central staff who have part-time posts: their cure of souls means they can be paid out of the stipends account. But beyond that, money from the stipends accounts is tightly regulated.

The pastoral account (which is not split between income and capital) is much broader in application. Once the expenses of operating the account have been met, the DBF may 'apply...moneys by way of grant or loan to the provision, restoration, improvement or repair of churches and parsonage houses in the diocese, including the repair of any redundant building vested in the board pending the coming into operation of arrangements under a redundancy scheme, or to other purposes of the diocese or any benefice or parish in the diocese' (s.78.3 (a)). In other words, parsonages can be sold off and the proceeds used for whatever purpose the diocese thinks fit. Not much of a ring-fence.

And it is to the pastoral account that the proceeds of parsonages are usually put. Once the parsonages are vested in DBFs there is much less a parish can do to prevent their sale. Since the proposals before General Synod are no more than a case of 'tidying up,' talk of a land grab or asset-stripping are presumably no more than an expression of the narrow, selfish view of the parochially-minded. After all, if we cannot trust the bishops and their senior staff, where would we be? **ND**

devotional

Baptismal unction From St Cyril of Jerusalem

Having been 'baptized into Christ,' and 'put on Christ,' you have been made conformable to the Son of God; for God having 'predestined us to the adoption of heirs' made us 'share the fashion of Christ's glorious body.' Being therefore made 'partakers of Christ,' you are properly called Christs, and of you God said, 'Touch not my Christ,' or anointed. Now you were made Christs, by receiving the emblem of the Holy Spirit and all things were in a figure wrought in you, because you are figures of Christ.

He also bathed himself in the river Jordan, and having imparted the fragrance of his Godhead to the waters, he came up from them; and the Holy Spirit lighted on him, like resting upon like. In the same manner to you also, after you had come up from the pool of the sacred streams, was given the unction, the emblem of that wherewith Christ was anointed; and this is the Holy Spirit; of whom also the blessed Isaiah in his prophecy says in the person of the Lord: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor.'

For Christ was not anointed by human hands with oil or material ointment, but the Father, having appointed him to be the Saviour of the whole world, anointed him with the Holy Spirit, as Peter says: 'Jesus of Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit.' And David the prophet cried, saying: 'Your throne, O

God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of your kingdom; you have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God even your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows.'

As Christ was in truth crucified, buried and raised, and you in likeness are in baptism accounted worthy of being crucified, buried and raised together with him, so is it with the unction also. As he was anointed with the spiritual oil of gladness, the Holy Spirit, who is so called because he is the author of spiritual gladness, so you were anointed with ointment, having been made partakers and 'fellows' of Christ.

But beware of supposing this to be plain ointment. For as the bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is mere bread no longer, but the Body of Christ, so also this body ointment is no more simple ointment, nor (so to say) common, after the invocation, but the gift of Christ; and by the presence of his Godhead, it causes in us the Holy Spirit. It is symbolically applied to your forehead and your other senses; and while your body is anointed with visible ointment, your soul is sanctified by the Holy and life-giving Spirit. [*Mystagogical Catecheis* 3.1–3]

O strange and inconceivable thing! We did not really die, we were not really buried, we were not really crucified and raised again, but our imitation was merely in a figure, while our salvation is in reality. Christ was actually crucified...and truly rose again; ...we, by imitation communicating in his sufferings, gain salvation in reality... Christ received the nails... endured anguish; while to me without suffering...by the fellowship of his pain he vouchsafes salvation. [2.4-6] **ND**



'I am giving up Gay Bishops for Lent... roll on Easter!'

Shaking hands

In St Michan's Church Dublin it was once possible, and perhaps still is, to shake the hand of a mummified corpse, dubiously claimed to be that of an 'ould crusader'.

The handshake was said to convey luck, in the way that kissing the Blarney Stone bestowed eloquence. However, on my visit, the chief beneficiary of luck appeared to be the verger ('God bless yor') who introduced you to his macabre companion in return for a sixpence.

Shaking hands with a mummified reminder of a vanished past is not confined to Dublin. We like to think we have remained true to our roots even when we've moved far from them. We all know of 'Scottish Braveheart' who would die for their country, but won't live there. Or blunt Yorkshiremen whose hats remain on Ilkley Moor because they can't get from Weybridge to collect them.

Long after New Labour abandoned its Socialist clothes, it continued to sing *The Red Flag*, although many brothers and sisters knew no more of its words than New Year revellers do of *Auld Lang Syne*.

Affirming Catholics cling to the outward trappings of Catholicism, although true catholicity may be as dead as the crusader. Indeed the more gloriously vested he or she is, the more likely a priest of that persuasion is to have shed the doctrines that the vestments once proclaimed.

Their fans still call Arsenal Football Club 'The Gunners,' a reminder of the club's origin at Woolwich Arsenal. Now with the French in possession of Arsenal from manager to players, the team (or *l'équipe*) would be probably better nick-named '*L'Artillerie*.' Red Flag, red vestments, red replica shirts – brothers to the St Michan's mummy?

However, it is easy to mock the fashion failings of others while not noticing one's own shortcomings. Seeing the pictures of any newspaper's fashion editor, or watching TV's Trinny & Susannah, so critical of the dress sense of others, is proof enough.

In what ways do Catholics and Evangelicals shake hands with mummified remains for luck? Readers will have their ideas. I could put in my own sixpence worth but, if I did, I reckon my luck would run out before I could get back to Dublin.

Alan Edwards

Personal revelation

We must never forget the person of Jesus in the work of revelation

Patrick Henry Reardon is a Senior Editor of *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*

The teaching of Jesus was inseparable from his person. In the gospel we do not find our Lord appealing to universally available religious truths, truths that could stand on their own, truths accessible to man's mind apart from his teaching of them, truths that could outlive the person who spoke them. It is essential to grasp this fact, because it indicates an essential difference between Jesus and other religious founders.

To illustrate this difference we may take the example of Siddhartha Gautama some six centuries earlier. When Gautama gathered his disciples to listen to his Deer Park Sermon, he certainly appealed to his own experience of a revelation. He referred to his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree and expounded to his followers the meaning of that experience. He defined Dependent Causation and explained how to be delivered from it.

The essential difference

Some historians of comparative religion are of the opinion that this is essentially what Jesus did. Although they recognize a difference in the objective content of the two efforts, they imagine that the Deer Park Sermon and the Sermon on the Mount have this in common, that both preachers were simply expounding their religious theories. The problem here is that neither Gautama nor Jesus would agree with this assessment of the matter.

With respect to Gautama, it is important to observe that he never thought of himself as essential to his own message. Indeed, he made a point of saying that his religious experience was available to anyone who followed in his footsteps. He asked no one to believe in him as the exclusive channel of his teaching.

On the contrary, Gautama was persuaded that the Four Noble Truths would be just as true if he had never discovered them. What he had to say about the Chain of Causation would be just as valid, he believed, if he had never mentioned it. Gautama claimed to teach truths independent of himself and transcendent to his teaching of them. In short, Gautama never claimed to be the way, the truth, and the life.

The way, the truth and the life

When we look at Jesus, we are faced with something radically different. All who heard him recognized that he taught as 'One having authority.' Jesus expounded no truths transcendent to himself: what he taught was otherwise unknowable and inaccessible.

Indeed, how would we know that we have a heavenly Father who loves and cares for us, except on the testimony of Jesus? Is this an obvious or otherwise available truth? Again, if Jesus had not mentioned the fact, how would we know that the very hairs of our head are all numbered? Is it really self-evident, after all, that God has even the slightest regard for every sparrow that falls? Or that a loving Father clothes in beauty the flowers of the field? We know these things for one reason only, that Jesus told us so.

Thus, the religious message of Jesus is inseparable from the authority of his own person, his own 'I.' This 'I' is central to his message and permeates the whole of it. Jesus' teaching is founded on the proclamation, 'But I say to you.' This 'I' is the foundational component of the message, because Our Lord's doctrine stands or falls with himself. Jesus not only taught us that we have a Father in heaven, but he also claimed to be, in his own person, the sole access to that Father.

No resurrection, no gospel

This inseparability of Jesus and his teaching was, I submit, a major part of the crisis of Good Friday and Holy Saturday. While his dead body lay in the tomb, none of what he said could stand on its own. The authority that Jesus had claimed, to all human appearance, died with him. If death were the last word about Jesus' life, the Sermon on the Mount would be nothing but religious theory or plain old make-believe.

The teaching of Jesus, as well as the faith of those who believed that teaching, seemed radically discredited by the event of Calvary. The Apostle Paul perceived this clearly when he wrote that if Christ was not raised, we of all men are the most to be pitied. **ND**

Sacred vision

The *Noli me tangere* in cell 1 of the Convent of San Marco is remarkable among all the frescoes for its love of detail. Was it, perhaps, the work of a hand other than Fra Angelico's?

It is known that other artists worked on the cycle, and that one of them was Benozzo Gozzuoli, the painter of the jewel-box Chapel of the Magi in the Palazzo Rucellai, the Medici residence in Florence. A comparison of the rendering here of trees and of the flower-strewn meadow with similar details from the palazzo have persuaded some.

But the fascination of the picture lies not in the depiction of the garden – so neatly fenced against the forest outside – but in the figures: Mary, statuesque and monumental,



Noli me tangere

earthbound and reaching out as though to touch the intangible; and Jesus, with the hoe over his shoulder, floating, dancing almost (note the balletic cross-step of those wounded feet).

He is visible to her, and clearly bound to her with bonds of real affection (the forbidding gesture of the outstretched hand is also gentle and consoling). But he is already in another place and world. He is about to ascend to the Father.

Spring is apparent in the verdure which his feet do not touch. It will be to Mary, when he is gone, a sign that resurrection affects and changes the whole created universe.

Mark Stevens

Solitude and the city

From a night club dance floor to Morning Prayer in a church
Steven Young on building communities through Daily Prayer
and the search for identity within the patterns of city life

City life gives you the camouflage you need to be a cultural chameleon. You can exist in many different environments but be known intimately in none of them. Within five minutes of leaving the dance-floor of an after-hours club one morning, I was sitting in the back row of a central London church waiting for Morning Prayer to begin. Although seemingly contradictory, both the church and the club scene constitute communities that are alive and kicking in our cities. Their existence is indicative of our human need for fellowship and communion. Both are filled with those who thirst for love and truth in profoundly relational ways.

A challenge to society

In the thousand capacity nightclub, the packed dance-floor disguised the loneliness of the place. The anonymity was alluring. The physical closeness gave the impression of intimacy without the risky realities involved with building lasting relationships. The sense of community lasted as long as the drugs worked and the music played. No one wanted to go home, if home meant being alone.

Over the river on Oxford Street, the shops were just opening. The captivating advertisements told the same old lie that freedom could be sold. 'Belonging' was a bargain away. The only voice that offered an alternative was that of a street evangelist. He abused passers-by and screamed into a megaphone about hell, sin and demons. Until he got an ASBO, and had to move to Piccadilly Circus!

That same morning, people gathered in the church to say the office together. They sat pews apart, but their corporate recitation of the psalms bound them together in a spiritual unity of tangible strength. They witnessed to the unconditional love of Christ, in a city where love is often bound with many conditions. Such communities of prayer are distinctive. They are rooted in that which cannot be known fully – and yet this is precisely why they are rooted. This paradox is expressed in their liturgy and psalmody. Communities of prayer challenge an increasingly individualistic society in which the apparent freedom of self-reliance and of consumerism has led to disillusionment and captivity. Through such communities the

good news of the Christian gospel can be made accessible to those who are not aware of its existence or have been hurt by false projections of it in the past.

The various activities in which people were engaged that Saturday morning were all indicative of a greater search for authenticity. The daily office is a means by which the Church can promote the inherent attractiveness of Christian authenticity and community. All too often, the Church tries to make Christian authenticity accessible to others by trying

the Church may be ignoring one of the most valuable resources it has

to make expressions of our faith and our liturgy 'entertaining'. This has led to confused notions about what the Church is about. We are perceived to have lost our trust in the distinctiveness of the message we offer – to have lost our confidence in the continued relevance of the Christian message to the world today. It is not by coincidence that the favourite activity of the primary school children with whom I worked in Camden Town and King's Cross was maypole dancing. It was one of the few things in their lives that didn't pretend to be something it wasn't.

Part of the reason Daily Prayer remains both an underused and undervalued resource in the Anglican Church is because it is considered to be outdated and irrelevant. In many parishes, the various forms of Daily Prayer are neither used nor known to exist by anyone other than the clergy – who keep the offices privately, apart from their congregations. This helps to further the myth that the offices are designed for the clergy alone rather than for the nourishment of all. A commitment to keeping regular offices deepens faith and love in God. Daily Prayer provides stability, structure and meaning to daily life, reducing loneliness, anxiety and other problems exacerbated by them, such as depression, dependency and spiritual/physical exhaustion. Every church would benefit from allocating regular times each day at which its people would meet to pray together.

Daily Prayer crosses the boundaries of churchmanship and tradition. Corporate prayer keeps church buildings alive, open and, most importantly, prayed in on a daily basis – a visible witness in the communities of which they are part.

Communities of faith

A second objection concerns accessibility. Whilst many would argue that although Daily Prayer is fine for literate congregations, confidence is required to handle the variety of texts included in the service, and so it would be of little use to those with limited literacy or those approaching the church for the first time. Such objections are surmountable. One only has to look at how the Jerusalem Community in Paris has created liturgies of Morning and Evening Prayer in a format that is beautiful yet accessible to all. That over 200 people attend the Jerusalem Community's daily service of evening prayer at St Gervais is testament to the fact that there is a real call for such communities in our cities. The rising attendance at cathedral evensongs reflects a similar trend. What we need are not hidden huddles meeting in ghettos resistant to the contemporary world, but accessible, visible communities of faith. Such groups will not only strengthen the bond of fellowship between one another, but they will also witness to the ongoing intercession of Christ to the Father.

As yet no such community of Daily Prayer currently exists in London. There may be many complex reasons for this. Recently, much energy and emphasis has been placed on forming community through partnership and social action. However, by overlooking the importance of corporate Daily Prayer, the Church may be ignoring one of the most valuable resources it has for building community. Are there any religious communities that would be willing to answer the call for such work in London? Or should the work be led by the laity, operating in individual parishes? There are many questions that will need to be asked. What is certain is that when such communities are grounded in faith, they will provide a witness to a God who taught his disciples that when 'two or three are gathered together in my name there I am in the midst of them.' **ND**

Pass the bucket

Many thanks to the strong-stomached 30DAYS reader who spotted this gem in *Signs of the Times* – the journal of the Modern Churchpeople's Union. Reporting on the investiture of KJS as Presiding Bishop of TEC, the Bishop of Lincoln writes, 'The Introit at the Investiture Service was John Tavener's setting of words from the Liturgy of St Basil: *In you O Woman full of grace, all creation rejoices* – a hymn to Mary, but the sheer appropriateness of this text was not lost on the congregation so full of anticipation and bursting to celebrate their new Presiding Bishop at every opportunity.'



Beyond parody

And it's not just in the National Cathedral that members of TEC (prop: KJS) are bursting to celebrate. Over on Capitol Hill, St Mark's Episcopal Church trumpets its outreach in areas too numerous to list. But what caught our eye in particular was the latest offering from the St Mark's Players, 'a participatory company that uses theater to explore our lives – theologically and personally – and to serve our community and the St Mark's Parish' as the blurb on the website puts it.

'This show' – the website warned – 'contains adult themes and nudity'. Luckily, the *Washington Post* was able to fill us in: 'It's not the brief nude scene in *M. Butterfly*, a drama about a 20-year affair between a French diplomat and a beautiful Chinese spy, that makes the story notable. It's that the performance is in a church. In the St Mark's Episcopal Church production, the spy strips down to confront the diplomat with the fact that she is really a he. At this time of the year, St Mark's takes its cue from the liturgical season, making it a point to produce a play with more dramatic heft during Lent, said Rick Hayes, director of *M. Butterfly* and a St Mark's member. 'We try to choose a heavy-duty, thought-provoking drama,' Hayes said.

'At 134-year-old St Mark's, the theater company hauls up the cross in the nave into the church rafters and performs *M. Butterfly* on a stage surrounded on three sides by sanctuary chairs. Frequently the company weaves the church's rich architectural details – its soaring arches, wrought-iron lanterns, mosaic tile and

molded brick – into its productions. For matinee performances, light streams in through a massive Tiffany stained-glass window over the baptistery. The center panel depicts Jesus leaving Pontius Pilate's headquarters after the Roman governor washed his hands of him. The troupe sometimes serves refreshments on the high altar. 'We use everything in the church as much as we can,' Hayes said.'



Blind alleys

30DAYS was sorry to read online that Scargill House, deep in the Yorkshire Dales, which describes itself as 'an inclusive, multi-cultural Christian Community' which pursues 'a global vision of people living together in equality, in peace, in mutual acceptance and in harmony with the environment' seems to be having some problems. Due to 'the continued lack of growth in guest numbers' and the 'increasing costs of running Scargill', the House lost no less than £156,754 during 2005.

Apparently, Scargill particularly explores its 'global vision' in its life and worship: 'Finding innovative and dynamic ways of responding to God and to one another through worship and liturgy' is how its website puts it. Quite how dynamic one 30DAYS reader recently discovered, when he picked up an order of service containing the following, apparently antiphonal, Statement of Belief:

We believe in God, in Jesus Christ, in the holy Spirit, and in you and me.

We believe God moves between us, and lives in you and me.

We believe God's spirit works through

Shouting and silence

Clear paths & blind alleys,

Balloons and parties,

Drama and the unexpected

Spontaneity and planning,

Faith and certainty,

Leading and supporting,

Tears and laughter,

Dancing and stillness,

Hugging and kneeling,

Words and listening,

Holding and letting go,

Thank you and help me

Accepting and caring

Through you and through me, Through love.

We believe God's Holy Spirit lives in this community of handholding people,

where lines of age and life-styles are crossed.

We believe in responding to God's grace & love for all.

We believe in the poetry within each of us.

We believe in dreams and visions.

We believe in a topsy-turvy world

Where the last shall be first.

We believe in God's kingdom.

We believe in God.

The Warden of Scargill House is the Revd Hilary Mary 'Dilly' Baker.



Oz end of wedge

NEW DIRECTIONS has apparently been getting up the nose of the Bishop of Ballarat, Michael Hough. Writing on his blog recently, he complained to the world – well, the virtual world – that in this august journal you can read the 'vitriol and bitterness of people like...David Chislett'. Hmm. Checking back, 30DAYS sees that it is now over two years since the then Fr – now Bishop – Chislett last graced these pages with his immaculate prose.

The Australian postal service leaves a lot to be desired, to be sure, and Oz is a very long way away indeed, but it doesn't really explain why Bishop Hough seems to be quite so much out of date. Still, he's thoroughly up to date elsewhere on the blog, in his reflections on last December's meeting of his Diocesan Pastoral Committee:

'Next year at synod, legislation will be introduced to broaden out the diaconate to allow for women deacons'. Luckily, he explains that this decision was taken in the context of a discussion on the *permanent* diaconate, so that's all right then!

(Just like Graham Leonard said it would be.)

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What Katie did next

Geoffrey Kirk considers the options before the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church after the deliberations of the Anglican Primates at Dar es Salaam and suggests her most likely next move

No one should for a moment doubt the sincerity with which Katherine Jefferts Schori believes that she and The Episcopal Church are on the side of Jesus – or more accurately, that Jesus is on the side of The Episcopal Church and Mrs Jefferts Schori. But they are Americans; and no one should forget either, the fecundity with which that country has spawned new religions and subverted old ones.

I have, of course, no intention of comparing KJS with Joseph Smith, Ellen Harmon White or Mary Baker Eddy. She is thankfully less inventive than they were. But she is, nevertheless, the accomplished spokesperson for a New Religion.

Independent origins

Episcopalian revisionism is rooted in the Enlightenment. The Declaration of Independence, with its ringing phrases – ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness’ – was, after all, penned by and largely signed by Episcopalians (thirty-one out of thirty-nine). Its notions of self-evident truth and inalienable rights, together with a potent sense of the God-given vocation of the American people (to come to the aid of all to whom those truths are *not yet* self-evident), have fused to create a new version of Anglicanism on American soil.

Both these elements – the *a priori* assertions and the provincial self-assertiveness – have come into recent prominence in inter-Anglican disputes.

In the first instance, reference is constantly being made to the ‘Baptismal Covenant’, a novel feature of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer (later widely imitated in other parts of the Communion; see Bryan Spinks *Reformation and Modern Liturgies and Theologies of Baptism*, 2006).

Though the 1979 Rite does include the Apostles’ Creed, it is not the ancient baptismal symbol of the Western Church to

which attention is being drawn. The focus is insistently on the last of an additional list of undertakings. It commits the candidate ‘to strive for peace and justice and respect the dignity of every human being.’

Baptismal Covenant

This commitment, couched in the code language of the leftist consensus of the Sixties and Seventies, has become definitive for Revisionist Episcopalianism. It is the ethical *a priori* premise of all that it is and seeks to do. But it needs unpacking.

In the contemporary American Church, ‘justice and peace’ have been effectively equated with the United Nations Millen-

the Declaration of Independence was penned by and largely signed by Episcopalians

nium Goals, which featured prominently in Mrs Schori’s inaugural address.

‘This church has said that our larger vision will be framed and shaped in the coming years by the vision of shalom embedded in the Millennium Development Goals – a world where the hungry are fed, the ill are healed, the young educated, women and men treated equally, and where all have access to clean water and adequate sanitation, basic health care, and the promise of development that does not endanger the rest of creation. That vision of abundant life is achievable in our own day, but only with the passion-

ate commitment of each and every one of us. It is God’s vision of homecoming for all humanity. [Applause]’

Respect for the dignity of every human being has been translated into wholehearted acceptance of the entire lesbian-gay-transsexual agenda. (‘I am what I am / and what I am needs no excuses’ – the torch song theme tune of *La Cage aux Folles* – has been elevated to a theological principle.)

To understand the emotional force of all this, a third factor needs to be taken into account: guilt. Not only were Episcopalians dominant in the Enlightenment programme of the American Revolution, they were also, overwhelmingly, slave owners.

Legacy of slavery

It would be hard to exaggerate the enduring sensitivity about slavery which characterizes relations between black and white Episcopalians. In the present culture of public apology, and in the two hundredth anniversary of the ending of the Atlantic slave trade, guilt features largely in The Episcopal Church. On the strength of it, Episcopalians have uncritically accepted the analogy made by gay and feminist groups between the Church’s traditional refusal to ordain women and to ordain practising homosexual persons with slavery. They have been eager, in consequence, to purge their guilt about past transgressions against black Americans by unconnected and inappropriate concessions to entirely unrelated groups.

All this KJS must take into account as she tiptoes along the tightrope onto which she launched herself in Dar es Salaam.

And a tightrope it most certainly is. The best she can hope to cajole from the liberal majority in TEC is a brief moratorium in the expectation that the rest of the Communion will see the light. But even this will not easily be achieved. Jack Spong (who else?) has already thundered against it, and Gene Robinson, in an urbane, witty and closely reasoned letter to all his fellow bishops, has attacked her strategy as unprincipled (which it

THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT 1979

To the three questions, ‘Do you believe in God the Father?’ ‘Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?’ and ‘Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?’ the response is the relevant part of the Apostles’ Creed. It then continues:

Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers? *I will, with God’s help.*

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord? *I will, with God’s help.*

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ? *I will, with God’s help.*

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbour as yourself? *I will, with God’s help.*

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? *I will, with God’s help.*