

newdirections

April 2012
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Religious Life: 'a thing of the past'?

Peter CSWG on the future
of Anglican Religious Life

Also in this issue:

- The Cleaver Trust
- In the footsteps of Vincent de Paul
- The Glastonbury Pilgrimage

parish directory

722317 www.stsaviourseastbourne.org.uk

FOLKESTONE Kent, **St Peter on the East Cliff** A Forward in Faith Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: 8am Low Mass, 10.30am Solemn Mass, 6pm Evening Prayer. Weekdays - Low Mass: Tues 7pm, Thur 12 noon. During Interregnum - tel: 01303 254472 www.stpeterschurchfolkestone.org.uk - stpetersfolk@yahoo.co.uk

GRIMSBY St Augustine, **Legsby Avenue** Lovely Grade II Church by Sir Charles Nicholson. A Forward in Faith Parish under Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: Mass 9am, Parish Mass 10.30am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction 6pm. Weekdays: Mon, Wed and Sat 9.30am, Tues and Fri 7.30am, Thur 7.30pm. Vicar: Fr Stephen Jones 01472 877109

HARTLEPOOL St Oswald's, **Brougham Terrace**. A Forward in Faith Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverly. Sunday: Sung Mass 9.30am, Benediction 6pm. Daily Mass, Offices and Confessions as displayed. Parish Priest: Fr Graeme Buttery ssc 01429 273201

HEMPTON Holy Trinity (near Fakenham, Norfolk). ABC, FIF. The Church on the Green. Visit us on the way to Walsingham. Mass on Sundays and Wednesdays at 9.30am. Linked to the Shrine of OLW. Parish Priest: Fr Allan Buik ssc 01328 820030

KINGSTON-upon-THAMES St Luke, **Gibbon Road** (short walk from Kingston railway station) Sunday: Low Mass (English Missal) 8am, Sung Mass (Western Rite) 10.30am, Evensong and Benediction 5pm. 3rd Sunday each month: Teddy Bears Service for pre-schoolers 9.30am. For further information phone Fr Martin Hislop: Parish Office 020 8549 4551 www.stlukeskingston.co.uk

LEAMINGTON SPA St John the Baptist Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet - all resolutions passed. Daily Mass. Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Parish Mass 9.30am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction (1st Sunday only) 3.30pm. Traditional Catholic Worship in a friendly atmosphere. Parish Priest: Fr David Lawson ssc 01926 422208 www.fifparish.com/stjohnleamington

LIVERPOOL St Agnes and St Pancras, **Toxteth Park** (FIF & ABC) Sunday: Parish Mass 10am; Solemn Evensong and Benediction 6.30pm. Daily Mass. Sunday School. Glorious J.L. Pearson Church, with modern catholic worship, good music and friendly atmosphere. Parish Priest: Canon Christopher Cook ssc 0151 733 1742 www.stagnes.org.uk

LONDON EC3 St Magnus the Martyr, **Lower Thames Street** (nearest Tube: Monument or Bank) Resolutions ABC. Mass: Sunday 11am, refreshments following, Tues, Thur and Fri 12.30. Visitors very welcome. www.stmagnusmartyr.org.uk Fr Philip Warner saintmagnus@bulldoghome.com

LONDON N1 Holy Trinity, **Hoxton** Sunday: 10am Solemn Mass and Sunday School. Midweek Services: contact Fr Andrew Newcombe 020 7253 4796

LONDON N21 Holy Trinity, **Winchmore Hill**. A Forward in Faith modern catholic Parish. Resolutions ABC. Sunday: Mass 9am and 10.30am. Weekdays: Tues to Fri 12 noon Angelus and Mass. Saturday: Rosary 9.30am, Mass 10am, Reconciliation 11am. Confessions Saturday at 11am or by appointment. Contact: Stephen Whittam on 0208 886 5217

London NW9 Kingsbury St. Andrew A FIF Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham Sunday: Mass at 8am and 10am. Tube to Wembley Park then 83 Bus to Church Lane Parish Priest: Fr John T Smith ssc 020 8205 7447

LONDON SE13 St Stephen, **Lewisham** (opposite Lewisham Station) A Forward in Faith Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham. Sunday: Mass 8am, Parish Mass 10am. Weekdays: Mon 7am, Tues 7.30pm, Wed 12.15pm, Thur 8am, Fri 6.30pm, Sat 8am Parish Priest: Fr Geoffrey Kirk 020 8318 1295

LONDON SE16 St Mary Rotherhithe, **St Marychurch Street** SE16 4JE A Fulham Parish. Sunday: Solemn Mass 10am, Evening Prayer 6pm, Benediction monthly. Mass times: Tues 12 noon; Wed 10am School Mass; Thur 6pm; Fri 9.30am; Sat 9.30am. Tube: Jubilee Line

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BARRY near rail, bus and town centre *Gredo Gynnu* (FIF Wales) **St Mary's, Holton Road** Sunday: Solemn Mass 8am and 11am, Sunday Club 11am, daily Mass, except Friday; **St Cadoc's, Coldbrook Road** Sunday: Solemn Mass 9.30am, Vespers 6pm Saturday with Benediction 1st Saturdays. Daily Mass in Parish except Friday. Priest to be appointed - 01446 406690

BEXHILL on SEA **St Augustine's, Cooden Drive, TN39 3AZ** Sunday: Mass at 8am, Parish Mass with Junior Church at 10am. Further details: Father Robert Coates ssc on 01424 210785

BIRMINGHAM St Agatha, **Stratford Road, Sparkbrook** (B11 1QT) "Any similarity between the Church of England and St Agatha's is purely coincidental!" (A Diocesan Official - 2007) Sunday Mass 11am. Secure Parking. Canon John Herve ssc - 0121 449 2790

BISHOP AUCKLAND St Helen Auckland, **Manor Road, West Auckland** Medieval church, Forward in Faith, Resolutions ABC. Sunday: Sung Mass 10am, Evensong and Benediction 6pm. Weekday Mass: Mon 7pm, Tues, Thur, Fri, Sat 9.30am, Wed 10am, Rosary Mon 6.30pm. Parish Priest: Canon Robert McTeer ssc 01388 604152 www.sthelenschurch.co.uk

BLACKPOOL St Stephen on the Cliffs, **Holmfield Road, North Shore** Vicar: Canon Andrew Sage ssc. Sundays: Said Mass 9am, Solemn Mass (Traditional Language) 10.30am, Evening Service 6pm; easy access and loop. Tel: 01253 351484 www.ststephenblackpool.co.uk

BOSTON LINCOLNSHIRE St Nicholas, **Skirbeck** Boston's oldest Parish Church. Forward in Faith Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: Low Mass 8am (1st and 3rd), Sung Mass 9.30am. Daily Mass, offices, benediction and confessions as displayed on notice boards. Rector: Fr Paul Noble ssc 01205 362734 www.forwardinfaithlincs.org.uk/stnicholasboston.html

BOURNEMOUTH St Ambrose, **West Cliff Road, BH4 8BE**. A Forward in Faith Parish with Resolutions ABC in place. Sunday: 8am Low Mass BCP, 10am Sung Mass Traditional Ceremonial, modern Rite, 6pm Evensong. Parish office 01202 766772

BOURNEMOUTH St Francis of Assisi, **Chamminster Road** (corner of East Way) A Forward in Faith Parish under the care of the Bishop of Richborough. Resolutions ABC. Sunday: 8am Low Mass, Parish Mass 10am, Evening Prayer and Benediction 6.30pm - first Sunday of each month and major festivals. For information about all services during the Interregnum contact Barbara Geatrell 01425 470370 or Hubert Allen 01202 529336 (Parish Office) Churchwardens www.stfrancis-bournemouth.org.uk

BRADFORD St Chad, **Toller Lane** (B6144, 1 mile from city centre). Sunday services: Low Mass 8.30am, Solemn Mass 10.45am, Evensong and Benediction 6.30pm. Weekday Masses 8am (except Wednesday 7.30pm and Thursday 9.15am). Parish Priest: Canon Ralph Crowe ssc 01274 543957. Resolutions ABC. English Missal/BCP www.stchads.dial.pipex.com

BRIDPORT St Swithun Resolutions ABC. Sunday: Low Mass 8am; Sung Mass 9.30am, Evening Prayer and Benediction second Sunday 6pm. Weekday Masses: Tues 12 noon, Wed 9am, Thur 10am. Parish Priest: Fr Peter Edwards 01308 456588

BRISTOL All Saints, **Pembroke Road, Clifton** (near zoo and suspension bridge) Sunday: Mass 8am, Family service 9.30am (Mass 2nd and 4th Sunday), Solemn Mass 11am (children's group), Evening Service with Benediction 6pm. Feast days: 7.30pm Solemn Mass. Daily Mass. Confessions: Saturday 11.30am, 5.30pm or by arrangement. Resolutions ABC (Ebbsfleet). Information, appointments: Fr Richard Hoyal 0117 970 6776

BRISTOL Christ Church, **Broad Street, Old City Centre BS1 2EJ** Resolutions ABC. Sunday 11am Choral Eucharist, 6.30pm Choral Evensong with Anthem and Sermon. Georgian gem, Prayer Book services, robed men and boys' choir, Renatus Harris organ. Tues, Thurs

and major holy days: 1.05pm Eucharist. Regular recitals and concerts (see website). Parish Priest: Fr Richard Hoyal 0117 9706776 www.christchurchcitybristol.org

BRISTOL Holy Nativity, **Wells Road (A37), half a mile from Temple Meads Station** A Forward in Faith Parish, Resolutions ABC. Sunday: Solemn Mass and Junior Church 10am, Friday Mass 10.15am. The parish is in interregnum. Contact: Philip Goodfellow, Churchwarden 07733 111 800 phil@goodfellow.org.uk

BROMLEY St George, **Bickley** Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Sung Mass 10.30am. Daily Masses: Mon 7.30am, Tues 9.30am and 7.30pm, Weds 10am, Thurs 9.30am, Fri 9.30am and 6.30pm, Sat 9.30am. Times of Confession and other information from Fr Owen Higgs on 020 8467 3809



SHREWSBURY - All Saints with St Michael

CARDIFF near rail, bus, Millennium Stadium, city centre and Bay Daily Mass; *Gredo Gynnu*. **Bute Street St Mary**: Sunday: Solemn Mass 11am; **Pentre Gardens St Dyfrig** and **St Samson**: Sunday: Solemn Mass 9.30am; **Paget Street, Grangetown St Paul**: Family Eucharist 10am. Parish Priest: Fr Graham Francis 02920 487777. Associate Priest: Fr Ben Andrews 029 20 228707

CHARD The Good Shepherd, **Fumham**. Resolutions ABC Sunday: Sung Mass 9.45am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction (3rd Sunday only) 6pm. Weekday Masses: Tues 10am. Contact: Heather McCann on 01 460 64531

CHESTERFIELD St Paul, **Hasland, Derbyshire** Sunday: Sung Mass 9.45am (Family Mass 1st Sunday), Evening Prayer 3.30pm. Masses: Tues 7.15pm (Benediction last Tues of month), Frid 12 noon, Sat 8.30am. **St James, Temple Normanton, Chesterfield, Derbyshire** Sunday: Parish Mass 11.30am, Thur: Mass 7.15pm. Fr Malcolm Ainscough ssc 01246 232486

COLCHESTER St Barnabas Church, **Abbott's Road, Old Heath, Colchester** A Forward in Faith Parish. Resolutions ABC. Sunday: Said Mass 8am, Sung Mass 10am. Weekday Masses: Mon 6pm, Tues 10am, Thur 7pm, Holy Days 7.30pm. Check website for other daily services www.oldheath.org.uk Vicar: Fr Richard Tillbrook ssc 01206 797481 fathercap@hotmail.com

DEVIZES St Peter's, **Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire** A Forward in Faith Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet. Resolutions ABC. Sunday: Low Mass (BCP/EM) 8am, Sung Mass 10am, Exposition, Devotions and Benediction (First Sundays) 5pm. Thurs Low Mass 7pm. Mass on major Saints Days and other Festivals (times vary). Fr Peter Moss ssc 01380 724785

EASTBOURNE St Saviour's A Forward in Faith Parish with Resolution ABC. Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Solemn Mass 10.30am. Daily Mass and Office. Details and information from Fr Jeffery Gunn 01323

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Royal Visit

Simon Morris on the Royal visit to Tottenham

It was only the night before the visit that a hint was dropped that 'an HRH' was coming to the parish. The previous week

I'd been asked by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant to find a group of parishioners to meet senior business people and asked if they could use one of our halls for the meeting. I had wondered who these 'senior business people' might be, but reassured myself that it couldn't be anyone too important as things like that don't happen to me. In the end I met Their Royal Highnesses outside St Mary's and took them across the Vicarage Garden, where a path had been swept through the snow.

They went to our Kemble Hall to meet local residents, people who had lost their homes during the riots, and members of the business community. While the Duchess warmly and charmingly went round and spoke to people over tea downstairs, the Prince had his meeting with, among others, Sir Stuart Lipton. The members of the congregation reacted in disbelief when I told them who was coming; some complained they'd underdressed. With characteristic enthusiasm, one member of the team told the Duchess of Cornwall she should come here to Mass one Sunday. 'You invite me,' she said. 'I think we will.'



LEAD STORY

Religious life: 'a thing of the past'?

Peter cswg considers the future for Anglican Religious Communities

we
need
vision
– the
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of God
– and
as
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generation

From the *Observer's* agony columnist, Mariella Frostrup:

'Community is a thing of the past, social networks are increasingly in cyberspace and we're all being worn down by the death throes of our once great civilisation.'

(quoted from Catherine Pepinster's article on Soft Atheism in the Tablet, 4 February 2012)

Is community 'a thing of the past'? Or is it rather the place and context of *real* life, where people can become real and find their true selves?

If we are content with our Christian life, happy just to carry on with the faith we have received, then God will bless our endeavour, its steadfastness and faithfulness. If, however, we reserve critical questions about life as lived in this world, and are for exploring deeper, for answering the unresolved questions of life, then dialogue is of importance. Indeed it is critical for growing in our Christian life, and for a deepening of our relationship with God, of knowledge and understanding of him, for a satisfactory answer to the penetrating questions life poses!

The religious life is important because it *enables* all of these things to happen. It encourages such growth, and in a unique way, actually *facilitates* it, acting as a kind of catalyst for Christian progress in wholeness, and so benefits everyone.

Life in community

The religious life is first of all *life in community*. It is living at very close quarters with a number of people with whom otherwise you may have little in common apart from your Christian faith. It is a personal 'voyage of discovery' in self-knowledge, in tolerance, compassion, and in giving others space. It is based on the reality of the life of God himself, who is a community or communion of Three Persons. The hallmarks of growth are through the loss of self and service of others.

That community life is based on faith. By that, I mean not just correct doctrine but a *going out of ourselves*, like Abraham going out from Ur of the Chaldees, from all that is familiar into the unknown. A relationship of personal trust is fundamental to such a journey. Community life becomes important not only as personal growth but learning that in God, who is the

Source of growth in relation to others as well as in ourselves.

Religious life thus becomes a beacon for a Christian witness to stable relationship and faith in the world, where we can so easily be swamped by a surfeit of technological information and expertise, by the sheer speed of life and decision-making – the increasing complexity of life – and it becomes ever more difficult to 'steer' or even find our way.

Original purpose

The original purpose of the monastic life, which came to birth in the mid-fourth century with the Desert Fathers and Mothers, had its prime aim in keeping the Church centred on her true goal: 'seek first the Kingdom of God' (Matthew 6.33). From the time of the Peace of Constantine in 313 AD, when the Christian faith and the Church stopped being persecuted, there has always been the temptation for the Church to settle down, to conform her faith to this world's values, and so blunt the sharp cutting edge of the Gospel. Religious life keeps alive the radical call to follow Christ and to live out his triumph over 'the powers of death', meaning not just physical death but all the spiritual atmosphere of negativity and gloom we constantly encounter, of all that goes against the good, prompted by the powers of darkness that invisibly pervade this world (Ephesians 6.10–21).

Monastic life therefore has this invitation from her Lord, this single purpose to be alongside the Church in living out the conversion of her heart, through returning always to her true goal and her 'first love', the kingdom of God, the reign and rule of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of each one of us: Christ, as the centre and being of all we are. It is this response to his invitation that enables and manifests the final goal of all Christian life: to become the full grown man or woman in Christ, his new creation, a new humanity.

Lighthouses of prayer

Such a life serves as light for the world. Fr William of Glasshampton actually spoke of monasteries and convents as 'lighthouses'. Lighthouses are vital for avoiding rocks in stormy seas. The monastic way is functioning

truly and most effectively when it is living out this purpose of shedding light for others, because 'without vision the people perish' (the Book of Proverbs). We need vision – the Light of God – and as never before in our generation. The Light of God is given through the gift of contemplation.

If we think of the great contemplative saints, a Francis or a Catherine, a Teresa or Seraphim, it is the work of God in each one, their visible closeness to God and reflection of his being in their lives that inspires vision and hope for others. We need to share their vision and enthuse about the Light and Energy of God, that affects profoundly the lives of others and the whole Church.

Contemplation

Contemplation is not a special gift for a select few. It is the goal and aim of all Christian life. It happens when God rules in our minds and hearts and wills sufficiently (through a purifying of our inner being) to give us *his* Light, *his* mind, *his* prophetic word, to share with the contemporary Church. It is the Christian life wholly interiorized and supremely fruitful.

It is the way through the present crisis, which is not peculiar to our Church but belongs to the *whole Church*, pervading East and West. It is a crisis of faith amidst the rationalism, liberalism, fundamentalism, modernism and atheism of our age. We tread this way by building up our church

communities (parish, dioceses and the religious life) in faith and love, because prayer is, and has to become, the epicentre of human life. Monastic life is there to share this from her experience.

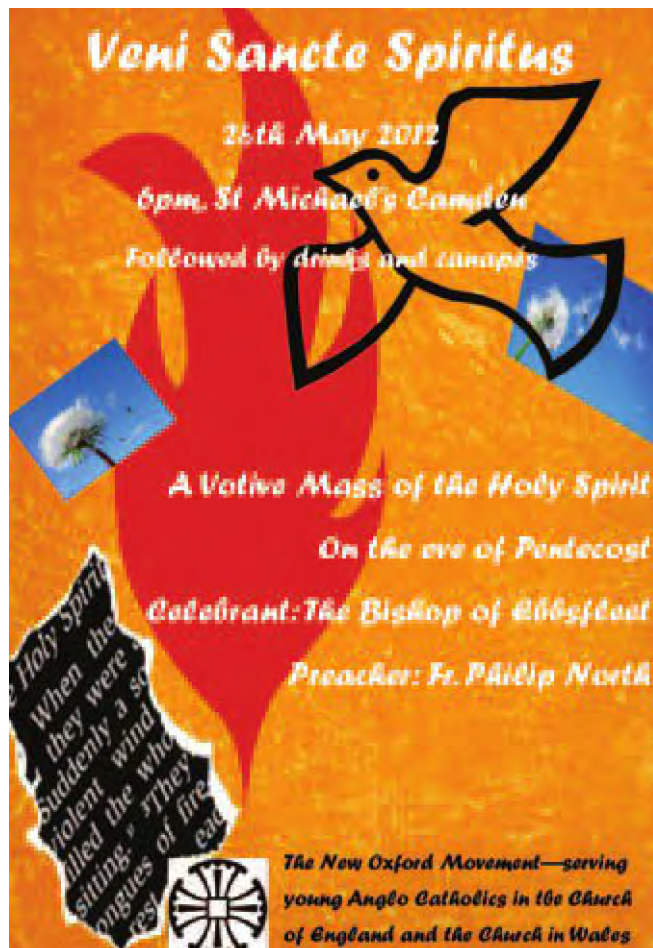
Prayer – relating to God

All this finds its development and fulfilment in prayer and life in God. It is helped to grow in each one of us through what we might call the five S's of monastic life: Solitude, Silence, Stillness, Slowness ('he who believes will not make haste'), Stability. The *virtus* (virtue) or strength of Discretion arises from them as their fruit.

How do we know this to be true? Ultimately we learn it from God himself through the life of prayer, for it is out of such that comes this awareness of the awesome truth of God's being – what kind of a God he is. Then there is Light. Contemplation is not some quaint calling for a select few but *the completion of our Christian calling*, when God instructs through a direct working in our hearts and minds and wills through prayer.

Life in community is the framework for true relationship to the source and origin of all relationship, and so to our fellow human beings, and to nature. The tradition of religious life enables this to happen and grows it by testing; it encourages us to be real. That can only happen in Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, but it benefits everyone, and not only the Church.

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Religious life – a future?

We conclude: communities are not 'only in cyberspace' but are for real, for each one of us and *we* become real by enabling them to work. At the heart of that is faith in God, the source of all living communion.

How can we invigorate others in the Church in the Truth she has received, of all God has done for us in Christ, in which we believe passionately, which is also the truth for those who are at present outside that knowledge? The answer rests in the life and building up of our ecclesial communities, in the parish and in the diocese; the religious life remains its confirmation and exemplar.

Has religious life a future? We are assured from God it will never die. It is essential for the fullness of the Gospel proclamation, and therefore for NOM to accomplish its particular unique task. As long as we are convinced enough to ask him to send men and women to serve it, religious life has a future and its monasteries and convents as 'powerhouses of prayer' (Fr Gilbert Shaw) for the mission of the Church. **ND**

*Address to the New Oxford Movement
at St Mary's, Rotherhithe
Saturday 18 February 2012*

To be a deacon

Richard Norman offers some thoughts on the distinctive ministry of the diaconate and addresses some common misunderstandings

There was a lot wrong with my theological college, but something which seemed to me singularly egregious was the declaration on the college's website that '[their] primary mission [was] to prepare women and men for ministry as priests...' In this case, the significant error was not in respect of women's ordination, but rather in the idea that the ministry for which one was at seminary being formed, and the vocation in answer to which one was endeavouring to respond, was that of priesthood.

For the ordination which follows that period of formation and study is *not* to the priesthood but to the *diaconate*. This misemphasis is a common one, and is unhappy testament to the Western Church's lack of esteem for, and indeed understanding of, its deacons. Thus I would in this article like to offer a few thoughts on the subject of the distinctive ministry and spirituality of the diaconate.

Assistant

Diakonia, we are informed, means *service*: but, as the erstwhile Priest-in-Charge of St Thomas the Martyr, Oxford has made clear, the origins of the ministerial diaconate lie not (primarily) in works of charity, but in assisting the performance of the Christian cult, i.e. they lie at the altar.

This is service in the sense of waiting upon someone – for the deacon, waiting upon the bishop. A deacon is an *assistant* to his bishop, in contrast to the priest who, in celebrating the Eucharist, is a *substitute* for him. Thus at a diaconal ordination it is (at least meant to be) the bishop alone who lays hands upon the ordinand, whereas a priestly ordination is, in effect, concelebrated by those priests present with the bishop, who all lay hands on the candidate.

Similarly, when the bishop celebrates Mass, his concelebrants retire to a distance from the altar whilst the

deacon remains at his side.

The deacon prepares the altar, and assists the celebrant: this liturgy of the altar is complemented by his role in the liturgy of the word, in which the proclamation of the Gospel is the deacon's distinctive task.

The Gospel

Hence why, when any Anglo-Catholic *priest* worth his salt has to announce the Gospel during Mass, his hands stay firmly together as he greets the people with 'The Lord be with you' (rather than extending

**this is service in the sense
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them as he might do as he prepares to pray the Eucharistic Prayer). He is exercising his *diaconate* rather than his priesthood.

The Holy Father recalls Pope Paul VI who, during the Second Vatican Council, 'once told the masters of ceremonies that he himself would like to be the one who enthroned the Gospel. [The M.C. replied,] 'No, this is a task for deacons and not for the Pope, the Supreme Pontiff, or the Bishops' [Paul VI] noted in his diary: But I am also a deacon, I am still a deacon, and I too would like to exercise my diaconal ministry by enthroning the Word of God.'

Spirituality and fidelity

Diakonia, service, is likewise the dominant theme in a diaconal *spirituality*, a spirituality to be practised by all members of the Church, whether (in the case of the clergy) because they retain the imprint of diaconal character regardless of the order to which they are subsequently ordained, or simply because Christ at the Last Supper

enjoined service upon the disciples as an example for all Christians to follow.

The sacramental ordination of *some* to the diaconate serves in one respect as a visible sign to the entire Church of this *universal* vocation to service.

John Paul II identified *fidelity* as a second characteristic of diaconal spirituality: 'fidelity to the Catholic tradition, especially as witnessed to by the *lex orandi*, fidelity to the Magisterium, fidelity to the task of re-evangelization which the Holy Spirit has brought about in the Church.' In the course of my year as a transitional deacon I have felt something of this in the extent to which the deacon is *dependent* upon the ministry of others, particularly the bishop and priests, for the performance of his own work. Administering Holy Communion in the absence of a priest to celebrate Mass is a great privilege, but is also a situation of incompleteness: the deacon's ministry here ought to spur the faithful above all to pray for priests!

Proper context

It is no real misunderstanding to think of *diakonia* as *charitable* service, merely a partial one. John Paul II commended those deacons who 'rightly strive to live without separating [their] liturgical service from that of charity in its concrete forms. This shows that the sign of Gospel love cannot be reduced to categories of mere solidarity but follows as a logical consequence of the Eucharistic mystery.'

The diaconate places charitable service into its proper Christian context, premised upon Christ's self-sacrificial service upon the Cross. It ought to raise for all Christians the necessity of connecting apostolic works to the Holy Sacrifice. **ND**

*This article is based on notes
for a talk given to Forward in Faith
Southwark in February 2012*

Nicholas Turner explains how and why the introduction of women bishops has been deliberately delayed by their most visible champions

If it were not for *Watch*, the Church of England would already have women bishops. I think this truth is too little understood. The introduction of women bishops has been significantly delayed by the most visible champions of women bishops.

Delaying not hastening

The organization that (seemingly) campaigns simply and directly for 'women in the house of bishops' has succeeded in *delaying* (not hastening) their introduction. Such an intention has been clear and deliberate. Not enough people realize this. It may be counter-intuitive, but it is both intelligent and intelligible. *Watch* knows what it is doing, however wrong that may be in our eyes.

There is a certain bitter hypocrisy, in that having now succeeded in delaying the legislation until they have got everything they want (even the fig-leaf of a worthless Code was only designed to make them look generous), they are now (entirely rationally) demanding that there be no delay whatsoever. And they seem (if press reports are to be believed) to have ensured that Parliament has already timetabled them into the schedules, so that there will be no delay at that stage either.

Confidently expected

Cast your mind back to the year 2000. It was confidently expected (both inside and outside the Church of England) that there would be women bishops by the time of the 2008 Lambeth Conference or, if the worst came to the worst, that all the legislation would have been passed by that time, so that they would be an established certainty. Dr Williams would have walked into Canterbury Cathedral with a (literal or metaphorical) woman bishop on either arm: a facetious image perhaps, but one shared, in different ways, by both sides of the debate.

You think it was we who delayed

it? Dream on. As a traditionalist minority, we make up at best 5% of the Church of England. With the conservative evangelicals, we might reach 10%. I happen to think that is a widely optimistic exaggeration; but even if you add another 5% for good measure, just to bolster your wishful thinking, you still cannot reach half-way to the *minimum* requirement of the one-third necessary to put a break on progress.

No secret

Of course, we oppose the altering

**better to delay than to
allow a proper place for
those who cannot accept
the new order**

of Church Order. Of course, we do not wish to see women bishops in the Church of England. We have never made a secret of either conviction. But the idea that it is we who are leading the opposition to their introduction is pure fantasy. The tail does not wag the dog.

No, the desire for delay has come from the women members of the campaigning organization *Women and the Church*, and their allies. They have made no secret of their convictions either.

It is more important to them that no adequate provision be made for traditionalist Anglicans, than that women bishops should be introduced speedily. Better to delay than to allow a proper place for those who cannot accept the new order.

Worthwhile tactic?

Had they been prepared to acknowledge the promises made by Bishops to both Parliament and General Synod, and to accept the Lambeth Resolution, and to have agreed to the early amendments

that promised proper provision, the legislation to enable women bishops would have passed through all its stages a long time ago.

The question they have to ask themselves, when eventually they win their battle, is 'Will it have been worth it?' A full answer will not be possible until long after the fateful vote on July 9. But the question casts its shadow over deliberations even now.

What has this delay achieved so far? It has given space to the Holy Father to make his generous and imaginative offer to traditionalist Anglicans. Without *Watch*, it is not unreasonable to suggest, there would have been no reason for introducing the Ordinariate. OK, so that is a plus (and I do count it as a plus), but not perhaps one they would be proud of.

Cause of much harm

Within the beleaguered CofE, has the delay helped? Hardly. Every year of infighting is another year's distraction from the demanding challenge of mission in an increasingly secular age. The fact that ABC parishes have been disproportionately impeded by this internal political struggle is of no advantage to the church as a whole.

As we move to the July vote (about which most of us can do nothing, except pray) it is, perhaps, important to remind ourselves and others of this deliberate, but questionable, delaying tactic. It has surely been the cause of much harm. Will it prove beneficial in the long run? Will it really have been worth it, to destroy the comprehensiveness of the Church of England, for the sake of greater uniformity?

Will the CofE be better off without us? It is not for us to say, but at least we cannot be accused of delaying this innovation. Opposing it, certainly. But not delaying it. We should continue to say what we have always said, using the words of Jesus himself, 'That thou doest, do quickly.' **ND**

Anglican Patrimony

Christopher Trundle on the rich liturgy provided by the Prayer Book marriage service

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish' (from the Form of Solemnization of Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer).

The Prayer Book marriage service is one of the elements of the Anglican tradition which has remained central to the life of the nation for many centuries. Indeed, the opening words, 'Dearly beloved.,' are still known to many who are otherwise unfamiliar with the liturgy but have encountered them in literature, film or on television. While certainly forming a key part of our wider English cultural 'backdrop', it also continues to provide the building blocks of our society, establishing the basic unit of family life.

Clear teaching

The liturgy itself is rich in scriptural reference and imagery – the Epistles and early books of the Old Testament are particularly prevalent – and its teaching on the nature of marriage is clear and uncompromising: 'First, It was ordained for the procreation of children... Secondly, It was ordained for a remedy against sin... Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other.'

The Prayer Book is, of course, unrivalled in its insistence on instruction and explanation. As we would expect, an exhortation is provided to be read if there is no sermon, which focuses on the teachings of Saints Peter and Paul. Also notable is the final rubric which indicates the importance of the newly-married receiving communion either at the time of their marriage or 'at the first opportunity after.'

Of course, no suggestion is made as

to exactly how this might take place at the time of the marriage itself; appending the entirety of the Prayer Book Holy Communion service is rare, but not unknown (we can only suppose that a congregation invited to such an occasion would have greater forbearance and holiness than most).

Dignity and solemnity

It would be easy to suggest that this traditional marriage service is now 'outdated' given the variety of more 'accessible' texts provided in *Common Worship*, and to argue that it no longer speaks to our society in the way it used to. While developments in that society (not least regarding the place of women) make elements of the service difficult for many, it nonetheless conveys the dignity and solemnity of the marriage bond in an extraordinarily rich way.

Debate on the place of the Church in national life will continue for many years to come. The enduring value of the marriage service stands as a reminder, however, of Christ's claims on all of creation, and of the role of his Church as his body in the world.

A now little-known entry in the marriage section of the English Hymnal is John Keble's *The voice that breathed o'er Eden*. This hymn sets marriage in the context of God's creation and sets forth the Church's teaching (notwithstanding that the phrase 'Be present, awful Father, To give away this bride' is easily misunderstood). Rejected is the notion that marriage is simply a civil contract; rather it is presented as a means of grace and a participation in the wider scheme of salvation.

O spread thy pure wing o'er them,
Let no ill power find place,
When onward to thine altar
The hallowed path they trace,
To cast their crowns before thee
In perfect sacrifice,
Till to the home of gladness
With Christ's own Bride they rise.

John Keble **ND**

Hacked off

If you wanted proof that FiF is at the margin of marginalized UK Christianity, look at the 'phone hacking' saga. ND must be the only tabloid with no former editor or journalist arrested for hacking. The Met must think we couldn't text let alone hack. Think of the 'double bubble' they'd have earned by travelling to Yorks to nick Nick. Not a chance to pass up on now Teresa's kitten-heeling cops' cash.

The hacking saga began with revelations about the phone hacking activities of NOTW's Glenn 'Trigger' Mulcaire. He was also a footballer, scoring the first ever goal for reborn AFC Wimbledon – the footballing wing of FiF. I wear my FiF badge with my AFCW scarf, bawling 'Yellow and Blue, Ooh, Ooh' as raucously as any Celtic fan sings 'God Bless Our Pope'.

Given the possible lead to 'Trigger', I would have thought that PC 49 would have lifted me higher than Elijah when I venture to St Michael's Harbledown or St Gabriel, Rough Common. So far less police presence than at a riot. Obviously the Met don't reckon us.

However, let's face it. If we decided to join our fellow red-tops and 'phone tap', what would we learn? No need to hack to learn the views of 'liberals' like 'Gaffer' Fraser (now c/o 'Grauniad' leader column). There's as much chance of escaping their opinions as of going a day without Meryl Streep featuring on 'The Torygraph' front page now that she's replaced Liz Hurley as that paper's 'squeeze'.

Also fair play to the *Watch* lasses. They reveal as much as any Page 3 girl by not hiding that they want us to clear off when they clean up.

So no need to hack – but think what we miss. No publicity from our editors appearing at the Leveson Inquiry. No slot on *Today*. But getting in a word against John Humphrys? Having experienced some bishops browbeating diocesan synods to vote the right way on 'the legislation – we could have hacked Humphrys to pieces.

Alan Edwards

Swedish reflections

Hanna Hart on the consequences of the decision to ordain and consecrate women in the Church of Sweden

As a Swede now living in Barnsley I offer here some reflections on my experience of the consequences of the decision to ordain and consecrate women in the Church of Sweden. Of course there are many differences between the two churches that makes a true comparison difficult, but on a couple of points we can see some interesting similarities.

A simple solution?

An argument we often hear for the introduction of women bishops (as well as priests) is that they are needed for the credibility of the Church in a modern society. In order to make mission more effective and to stop the decline in church attendance and reverse the anti-Christian tendencies in society we need to show that women have an equal place within the church. This is a very appealing thought – a simple answer to this prevailing problem. And many people, especially young intellectuals, state the Church's gender inequality as a major reason why they do not attend.

Sadly, with Swedish hindsight, it is not as easy as that. The same hopeful arguments were made in the debate leading up to the first female bishop in the Church of Sweden being consecrated in 1997. However, the subsequent discord and disunity within the church became an even larger obstacle and, of course, people who want to stay away will always find a good excuse. Unfortunately the decline in credibility within society and of attendance and membership of the Church of Sweden has steadily continued despite its increasingly 'equal' and 'liberal' theology and practices.

Real mission

Experience tells us that real mission is only possible through love and God has showed us once and for all that love means sacrifice. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that a great capacity for sacrifice, for the sake of the family, so often has been a special female charism. However, not only as women, but as Christians, seeking our own right to power and authority is always contrary to that missionary love. All authority comes from God and so its true meaning is an authority of love in sacrifice – not of political or administrative power over others. Therefore, in the face of the increasing disunity and division in the Church of England, it seems that the only fruitful way forward is to continue a life of humility and sacrifice, when possible, also together with people from across the divides. This way we can make mission possible and the Church credible in the true sense.

Code of practice

Getting to know the Church of England, after arriving from Sweden a decade ago, its astonishing breadth of

traditions and opinions was a surprising discovery. It was especially impressive to find that the differences were not only tolerated but encouraged to flourish side by side in legally sanctioned security. This wonderful diversity seems to be the church's greatest strength and fundamental to its identity. Of course, it goes without saying that the proposed code of practice for the CofE legislation about women bishops is not sufficient to protect that unity in diversity within the church.

The Church of Sweden took the decision to ordain women in 1958. In order to preserve unity within the church, the legislation included the equivalent to a code of practice – the 'clause of conscience'. This was to ensure that those ordinands, priests and bishops who in conscience could not accept this move, were not to be forced in any way to do or say anything contrary to their belief. However, for political

however, the subsequent discord and disunity within the church became an even larger obstacle

reasons this clause was over time disregarded, disputed and eventually dropped. Only two traditionalist bishops have been consecrated in the Church of Sweden since 1958 and the last one died of old age in 2009. During the last few decades ordinands and priests taking a new post have been forced to sign a document stating their

intentions to work 'fully' with priests of both sexes.

Very much alive

The Catholic movement in the Church of Sweden is now small, publicly persecuted and marginalized by the establishment. However, it is still very much alive and has new young and enthusiastic members as well as old trusty warriors who show scars of many battles. Within the Church of Sweden they are fighting to save something of its wonderful spiritual history and traditions – a mix of the best of Lutheranism and Catholicism interpreted in a uniquely Swedish way which, sadly, at the moment, is not allowed to shine through the fog of liberal intolerance and ignorance.

The determination of the Catholics of the Church of Sweden is of course foolishness to the world, but their sacrifices and their humble perseverance in working and praying for their sick mother church is a true sign of faith and hope and love.

Faithfulness in suffering will always be the true sign of our following Christ and manifesting his body in the world. If he suffered, alone and unjustly, should we expect anything else? We need that humility to be able to follow our vocation and sacrifice ourselves for the sake of the people of our church and country and through them for the sake of Christ.

Hopefully we can find that humility with the help of renewed contrition and confidence in God's providence. And with our eyes on the prize, the Easter at the end of our Lent, we can keep persevering in hope of eternal joy and peace. **ND**

faith of our fathers

Arthur Middleton on continuity in the episcopal office

Jeremy Taylor, in *Episcopacy Asserted*, is dogmatic in his assertions, and definite and clear-cut in his conclusions. He defends the episcopal office, when episcopacy had become controversial. For Taylor, 'episcopacy relies, not upon the authority of fathers and councils, but upon scripture, upon the institution of Christ or the institution of the apostles, upon an universal tradition and an universal practice, not upon the words and opinions of the doctors.'

Backbone of the Church

Following Cyprian, whom he frequently quotes, the episcopal office is the surest guarantee of the solidarity and unity of the Church. There was an historical parallel for him here. As in the Decian persecution the bishops of the great sees were first attacked, so it was in the national upheaval Taylor feared that 'The adversary of Christ and enemy of His spouse therefore persecutes the bishop, that having taken him away he may without check pride himself in the ruins of the church.' His main thesis is that the episcopal office is by divine institution, apostolical tradition, and Catholic practice.

Christ himself established this form of government and episcopacy that is 'in immediate order to the good

and benison of souls.' This means that the sacraments receive their validity from the operation of the Holy Spirit through the ministers of Christ. He insists that it was a part of Christ's plan that the merits of his own life and death should be mediated through the channels of his own appointment. He saw quite clearly that, humanly speaking, the backbone of the Church is the historic episcopate. Continuity of the body is not sufficient; there must be too a continuity in the episcopal office. Such continuity will be broken if women become bishops.

Jeremy Taylor establishes by an appeal to Scripture, in the well-known passages of the Gospels in which Christ is represented as setting up a jurisdiction and a government for his Church (Matt. 18.18, 16.18–19; John 20.22–3). 'The commission 'to feed' and 'to govern' – the latter he says is 'all one with the former' – was delegated to the Apostles by 'immediate substitution'; and the Apostolate was to be transmitted to others by the imposition of hands. Only 'Apostolic men' had the right of conferring ordination by the laying on of hands, which is a duty and office necessary for the perpetuating of a church.

So we find the bishops of the Restoration confident in the divine

institution of their office, and their determination to maintain without compromise the episcopal character of the Church of England. In 1660, the immediate concern was to define the principles that separated the bishops from the Presbyterians.

Confident in their commission

The Presbyterian incumbents maintained that they were legally members of the Church of England, and wanted to accommodate the Prayer Book to their principles, as the protagonists of women bishops today. The Episcopalians insisted that ordination by a bishop was the *sine qua non* of all holders of ecclesiastical office in the Church of England.

The settlement of the Church was effected when the political tide was flowing strongly against any kind of compromise with non-Episcopal communities. At the Savoy Conference, the bishops were able to assume the position of judges, hearing the Presbyterian proposals for alterations in the Prayer Book, and rejecting them on the ground that they would 'justify past Non-conformity.' The Act of Uniformity made it unlawful for one not episcopally ordained to hold any form of ecclesiastical preferment.

While the support of the Sovereign enabled episcopacy to triumph at the Restoration it is also evident that the high view of his calling characteristic of the Restoration bishop was due to considerations other than political. These bishops were men of wide learning, whose conception of the episcopal office was derived not from the Scriptures interpreted by some private or self-chosen standard, but from the Scriptures as interpreted by the whole Christian tradition. They believed in their own apostolic commission, in the office of bishop as a charge and trust in the Church of God and, with few exceptions, they struggled to live worthily of this high dignity. **ND**



'Big Brother 2013 - choose your Archbishop.'

Things visible and invisible

Tony Delves explains why we must counteract the forces of spin by making our presence more visible in the CofE

‘We ought to be more visible, like others. We should show that we are passionately committed too.’ The feeling expressed in these words led to a small group of us, lay and clerical, gathering outside Church House Westminster on the day the General Synod debated the Manchester Motion. It was bone-chillingly cold! But the group was cheerful, positive and polite, with a good number of younger men and women there, ‘flying the flag for fairness’, as one Synod member said.

The spinning wheel

The need for this presence reflects the way in which Synodical government now works. Regrettably, if you are not visible you are on the back foot, for what happens *outside* the Synod chamber is as crucial as what is said within it. It is subject to highly organized interest groups, just like Westminster, on which it is modelled. The weapons are intensive lobbying, demonstrations, e-technology and, crucially, media coverage.

From one point of view this merely reflects how decision-making takes place today, and the same tactics are available to all. The bigger issue though is that in the ensuing PR contest, the only sure ground on which we stand, theological discernment, is infected by spin.

Enter Dr Spin

It may be said that, as regards ‘spin’, it is new only in name, if by spin we mean presenting your case in the best light. However, today it has come to mean something more than this, namely an economy of truth, so as to obscure it, coupled with heavy partisan pressure, so as to promote it. Dr Spin forces the priority of issues and orders the argument. Sometimes you have to cry *Foul!* Let me give three current examples.

Firstly, the activity of the Parliamentary lobby. The role of Synod is to propose and of Parliament, through its Ecclesiastical Committee,

to scrutinize, in that order. This does not preclude free expression by MPs, but it should inhibit them from trying to exercise improper influence on the work of the Synod. The present intensive lobbying of Synod by certain MPs is clearly out of order. But they do it because it works.

Secondly, the appeal to ‘public opinion’. We are frequently told, notably on *Thought for the Day*, that for most people the whole issue of women bishops is incomprehensible and corrosive of the church’s reputation. It is far more likely that, outside a limited circle, *everything* to do with church

we must work to be seen as positive, principled people, loyal Anglicans who stand by inclusiveness

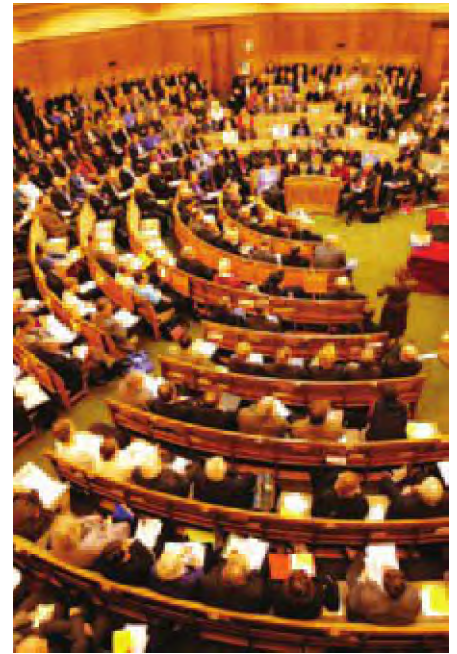
is incomprehensible and that most people couldn’t care less! The really pernicious aspect of this argument though is its appeal, over the church, to ‘the people’. *Vox populi = vox Dei*. Thank goodness this isn’t Germany in the 1930s.

Making us disappear

Thirdly, the manipulation of facts. We all know the jibes about statistics. Everyone uses them to advantage but in the church one would hope with a greater care for truth in their interpretation. In the February Synod there was some highly partisan presentation of the facts. Yes, the great majority of Diocesan and Deanery Synods support the draft legislation,

but there was scant regard for at least one-quarter of voters in Diocesan Synods who rejected the proposals. That is a lot of people to be airbrushed away. The effect is to make us disappear.

It is clear that wherever our case was presented strongly it drew support, including from those who want to see women bishops. But in many cases we



simply did not have enough people on the ground. Hence the results do not simply reflect an overwhelming majority but rather how fairly each side was represented. Sam Margrave put it well in the debate: we need to talk about consensus, not majorities. But spinning is about winning, not agreeing to differ.

The wages of spin

The moral is clear: if spin makes us invisible we must work at becoming more visible, to be seen as positive, principled people, loyal Anglicans who stand by inclusiveness. There are a lot of us, many of them women, but often too anonymous.

And what is to become of us? The assumption seems to be that, if the draft legislation passes unamended, we will simply move over or move off. The wages of spin is to end up believing it yourself! We may inadvertently encourage these assumptions by failing to make our presence felt. But what if most of us *do a Gandhi*: sit down and graciously decline to move? Our compliance is the one major issue that so far we have not cared to raise or our opponents to seriously consider.

You cannot force people to act against their conscience or accept, even grudgingly, what is unacceptable. This is planted deep in the folk memory of Anglican Catholics. But it is not a desirable place to be, and, for everyone’s sake, and not just our own, we must continue to press for that honoured place we were assured was ours. **ND**

devotional

The mastery of time

Evelyn Underhill

Have you ever noticed that Jesus is never recorded as taking a holiday? He retired for the purposes of his mission, not from it. He was never destroyed by his work; he was always on top of it. He was busier than anyone; the multitudes were always at him, yet he had time for everything and everyone. He was never hurried, or harassed, or too busy.

He knew exactly when the moment had come for doing something and when it had not. And so it has been in lesser degree with those who have caught his spirit; they have time. What is this secret of unhurried souls? It is quite simply that, like Jesus, they have learned what it means to live with him who is the Lord of time, with the one who himself is never hurried or hustled or perturbed. How does it happen, why is it that a person whose life is thus rooted in God and eternity acquires this mastery over time? For two reasons.

A new simplicity

First, because life takes on a new simplicity. We get harassed when life gets too complicated. We become distracted and distraught as one thing after another comes crowding in upon us. We never have time for anything because we have lost the power to do one thing. One always gets the impression from Jesus that he knew at any moment what was the single

thing that mattered. Next time you catch yourself saying, 'Oh, I haven't got time for that!' remember you are giving away your priorities. What has happened when we say we have time for nothing is that there is no one thing that has an absolute priority in our lives. We are constantly rushing around frantically busy with this, that, and the other – very often precisely so that we won't have to stop and face the choice which is: what are the few really important things in life? A life lived in God is a life that masters time.

Priorities

Secondly, those who live in God have not only got their priorities straight, they have learned that to live with God is to live always in the present, with him who is the eternal Now. We all know people who live in the past – and we usually laugh at them – for they are pretty harmless. But it is much easier, and much more dangerous, to live in the future. Remember how Jesus coupled mistrust of God with anxiety – always worrying about the morrow. And that applies not only to the morrow but to the next job. The reason why we get harassed, again, is that we are always thinking of what we have still got to do rather than of what we are doing. The secret of the busiest people who are also the calmest is that they are able to concentrate everything on the thing of the moment.

Living in the present means squarely accepting and responding to it as God's moment for you now, while it is called 'today' rather than wishing it were yesterday or tomorrow. A wise man has said: 'Only a Christian can live wholly in the present, for to him the past is pardoned and the future is safe in God.'

*From an unpublished manuscript,
edited by Arthur Middleton ND*

St Augustine's saying 'we are an Easter People and our song is Alleluia!' is often quoted and has achieved the status of a motto on prayer cards and the like. But what does it mean for us in our daily life? How do we live in the victory of Christ knowing as St Paul taught 'you have died and your life is now hid with Christ in God?' This is the essence of the spiritual life. Living in Christ who is Lord of the living and the dead and setting our minds 'on the things that are above'. Let me suggest three ways to live in the light of the Resurrection and in the love of Christ.

The first is to contemplate the fact of the Resurrection. Read the Gospel accounts of the resurrection appearance of Jesus. All of these include conversation with the Risen Lord – hear him speak to you. Pay attention to the transforming effect on the Apostles and share with them in their wonder; hear Jesus plead with you, as he did with Thomas, 'do not be doubting but believe'. Imagine Jesus coming in to console and strengthen

Ghostly Counsel

Easter people

Andy Hawes is Warden of Edenham Regional Retreat House

you in your confusion and fears as he did to the disciples locked in the upper room. Simply ask the Lord to renew and strengthen your faith in his risen life. Ask for grace to see and know where he is at work in your life now.

The second is to be more careful to attend and more attending in your partaking of the Eucharist and Holy Communion. This was the place of revelation in Emmaus and on the beach in the light of dawn. It is the sure place to know and share the presence of Christ. Prepare diligently to meet him there and be truly thankful for your sharing in

his life. The worship of the Church in the Easter season is a glorious experience; be as careful in your attendance for the fifty days of Resurrection as you were in the forty days of Lent.

The third suggestion is use one St Ignatius's spiritual exercises which he called 'contemplation to attain the love of God'. This begins by asking for grace to know the fullness of God's love. He continues by using all the senses to lift the mind and heart in thanksgiving for the love of God poured out on the whole of creation and of our experience of it in the here and now. The next step is to contemplate the outpouring of love and grace through the Christ which outweighs all the physical gifts and joys we are given through our senses. (The opening Chapters of the Letter to the Ephesians can be helpful here.) In this way our whole life and being finds its proper place in creation and we are invited to share in the 'glorious liberty of the children of God' for we truly are 'an Easter People and our song is Alleluia!'

In the footsteps of St Vincent de Paul

Alexander Robertson and **Tom Wintle** report on a visit to Paris to explore the inspirational life and work of a saint who devoted his life to caring for the poor

At the beginning of Lent, five pastoral assistants joined aspirants to the Company of Mission Priests on a trip to Paris to visit sites associated with the life and work of St Vincent de Paul, a seventeenth-century priest and reformer of the French Church at a time of acute crisis.

His life

St Vincent de Paul was born in 1581 at Ranquine in Gascony to a family of peasant farmers. At this time, French society offered very little class mobility and the only real way for a person to get any kind of social advancement was through the professions, and the priesthood was considered one such profession.

If this understanding of the priesthood was not sign enough of a serious problem in French ecclesiastical society, the fact that St Vincent was one of a large number of career priests ordained illicitly on account of their young age shows how far the rot had set in. St Vincent was ordained at the age of just nineteen and began a period of ministry in which he carried out, in a rather perfunctory way, the office of priest in Toulouse.

Two life-changing events led to his renunciation of his former way of life and to a deeper understanding of the character given to him at his ordination. In 1607, he journeyed to Marseille to collect an inheritance, but the boat on which he was travelling is said to have been captured by pirates and Vincent is supposed to have spent two years in captivity eventually persuading his slave trader master, a former Franciscan, to set him free

and also bring about the man's return to faith.

A deeper understanding

This led him to grow into a deeper understanding of his priesthood and his baptism; he was brought into a much closer relationship with Christ and began to understand his call to be an evangelist. Through his spiritual director, Berulle, he came to work for the de Gondi family as tutor to their children, but also ministering in a rural backwater called Châtillon-les-Dombes. It was

he saw that it was essential to answer spiritual and material needs as two sides of the same coin

here that he encountered another defining moment in his priestly life. He had been called to the death bed of a peasant and found the man living in poverty, not only materially but also spiritually. He had received such little catechesis that he was terrified of death and, knowing nothing of God's loving mercy, feared being sent straight to Hell.

It was at this point that St Vincent resolved that he would devote his life to care for the poor and the formation of clergy to care for the poor. He drew inspiration directly from Christ as the evangelist of the poor and the outcast, and his definition of poverty, where no distinction is drawn between material and spiritual poverty, meant that he, his priests, and later the daughters of charity, saw that it was essential to answer both spiritual and material needs as two sides of the same coin.

His experience in Châtillon-les-Dombes led to Mdme de Gondi setting him the task of converting those on the estate, a task so great that he recruited an Association of Priests of the Mission, a fraternity that still exists today and part of an umbrella organization to which the Company of Mission Priests belongs.

His challenge to us

Talks were provided by Fr North from Camden and Fr Ward from St Stephen's House. Fr North spoke of the way in which the life and work of St Vincent provides a very clear challenge to Catholics in the Church of England. St Vincent had a keen understanding of evangelization of the poor being the centre of the Christian life. This, in many ways, seems to be something that the Church of England has lost sight



of; for example, Fr North told us that when his former parish on an estate in Hartlepool fell vacant recently, the diocese spent two and a half years trying to recruit and was eventually unable to find anyone of the right tradition. Yet when St James's Sussex Gardens in London was vacant recently, there were 123 applicants. Fr North spoke very powerfully of the need for the Church of England to wake up and begin to serve those most in need.

Clergy training

Fr Ward provided an explanation of the French School which St Vincent de Paul's work had begun. This particularly focused on St Vincent's desire for an adequately trained and formed clergy who could effectively minister in the Church. The fact that many priests were 'career priests' meant that much of there was very little impetus to train clergy and so St Vincent began to hold Tuesday conferences for clergy.

This French School formed some remarkable priests such as Mssr Olier who evangelized a huge area of southern central Paris from the church of St Sulpice, and went on to invent the seminary system. It was this School, Fr Ward argued, which went on to inspire the Oxford Movement with their call that priests should magnify their office echoing St Vincent de Paul's original desire for adequately formed and trained clergy. Indeed, the principles of the French School can be found behind the building of Anglican theological colleges from the 1850s.

The Daughters of Charity

Among his many gifts, St Vincent, it seems, was particularly adept at encouraging the wealthy women of his parish at Châtillon-les-Dombes to help him in his work for the poor. As a result, the Ladies of Charity were established by St Vincent in December 1617. The confraternity grew rapidly and spread beyond his parish and throughout the city. It was not long before women, inspired by St Vincent, were offering their lives to the service of the poor and, in 1633, the Daughters of Charity was established and began to live in community under the guidance of St Louise de Marillac.

Perhaps the most beautiful factor in

the genesis of the Daughters is the fact that the congregation was not at all planned; indeed, St Vincent referred to it as the 'little snowball'. Answering the call of God and inspired by their founder, the Daughters represented a unique response to the needs of the poor and vulnerable in a particular place, at a particular time. Up to this point, women who consecrated themselves to God did so in convents and were thus removed from the world.

The Daughters, on the other hand, set out to bring help to the poor and needy in their homes and in the hospitals; alongside poverty, chastity, and obedience, the first of the Daughters to take vows also committed themselves 'to the corporal and spiritual service of the sick poor, our true masters.'

the Daughters set out to bring help to the poor and needy in their homes and in the hospitals

A wonderful privilege

On the evening before we left Paris we had the opportunity to visit the mother house of the Company of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul (happily, more commonly referred to today simply as the Daughters of Charity). We were met there by the wonderfully eccentric Sister Bernadette who gave us a delightful tour of the house and its grounds as well as a fascinating insight into the history of the Daughters and their life and work today.

After our tour we joined the Daughters for Vespers. Most of us had allowed our GCSE/O-Level French to get a little rusty, so it wasn't the easiest thing to follow but it was, nevertheless, a wonderful privilege to join the whole community in prayer. Indeed, it was especially wonderful to have the opportunity to pray in the Chapel of the Apparitions, which the community uses for its worship.

St Catherine Labouré


On the night of the 18 July 1830 St Catherine Labouré, who had entered the novitiate of the Daughters in the

February of that year, was woken by a small child who told her that the Blessed Virgin was waiting for her in the chapel. Our Lady spoke to St Catherine of the trials that lay ahead, specifically of the July Revolution of 1830, and that 'abundant graces' would 'be spread over all those who ask for them with confidence and fervour' in that place. St Catherine was blessed with a second apparition on 27 November in the same year.

This time the Blessed Virgin was standing atop a globe and her fingers were covered in rings that 'emitted rays of light, each more beautiful than the next'. She spoke to St Catherine and told her that the globe represented the world and each and every person; the rays, 'the symbol of the graces that I pour out upon those who ask for them.' At this an oval formed about Our Lady and at the top of the image was written 'O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.' She then told St Catherine to 'have a medal made according to this model.

Everyone who wears it around their neck will receive great graces. For those who wear it with great confidence there will be abundant graces.' When the image turned around it revealed the letter M surmounted by a cross, below which were the sacred hearts of Jesus and Mary. It is on this model the 'Miraculous Medal' was produced. Between 1832 and 1842, alone, it is estimated that 100 million of these medals were distributed throughout the world. Today, of course, they continue, to provide the faithful with a reminder of the most efficacious intercession of the Blessed Virgin.

A moving experience

The trip proved a very moving and interesting experience. Few of us had grasped the importance of the life of St Vincent de Paul, or indeed the huge amount of inspiration that could come from his life. The trip has certainly made us, as pastoral assistants, consider the time which we have spent in our parishes in a different way and has impressed upon us the need for the Church to draw inspiration from the lives of people like St Vincent de Paul so that we can be more adequately formed to work in the Church in the twenty-first century. 

Summer lovin'

David Clues on the range of views emerging in the CofE in the continuing debate on marriage and civil partnership

The bandwagon is rolling. Along the intended path of the government's drive to equalize contracts between consenting adults (heretofore known as 'marriage' and 'civil partnership'), the factions are ranging. One or two have broken cover in an attempt to slow the bandwagon's momentum. Others, ostensibly from the same organization (heretofore known as 'church'), have just as petulantly jumped on board to gee up the horses. Canon Angela Tilby, in a recent *Thought for the Day*, urged us to remember the significance of the matter of a sacrament – well, there's an area we haven't touched on before!

Petition to General Synod

A petition of 100 or so clergy in the Diocese of London – all legends in their own looking-glass – called upon the General Synod to leave aside tinkering with the 'wholly-irrelevant-to-real-people' business of who can wear frocks and instead focus on the pressing need for blessing couples where neither or both might wear the trousers.

The Bishop of London fee-fi-fummed in response, urging none to be distracted from the Church's primary mission – though such counsel should have been applied to any and all of the General Synod's agenda. The Archbishop of York with customary restraint and delicacy, whilst holding back from shedding an article of clothing, suggested that the Prime Minister might not have been acting in an altogether consensual or democratic way. And leaving to one side for now the contributions of Auntie's Cardinal ('grotesque') and Archbishop ('disappointed'), it must be serious 'cos Lord Carey (sometime Archbishop of Canterbury, for the benefit of readers), in a uncharacteristic example of outside-the-tent activity, has declared himself 'baffled.' (Resist, dear reader, resist.)

Yet there are others of a different point of view. The new boys – boys

for the time being only of course – in the big jobs of the Church of England have been prepared to contradict the old guard. The Bishop of Salisbury with 'fresh vision,' which he tells us helpfully is about getting us to see what he sees, wants everyone to feel the love. The new Dean of St Paul's, within hours of the announcement of his appointment, pitched a rainbow tent right on the Bishop of London's doorstep, so recently swept of malcontent chapter members. 'Ah, the blood of another Englishman...'

It all adds up to a frothy time ahead.

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Not since a former Canon Chancellor lasso-ed himself and the Dean with a guy-rope on the steps of St Paul's has there been such an opportunity for the Church of England to self-harm. The conflict between Parliament and National Church has been rumbling for some time. Ironically, on this issue, both sides have been headed in the same direction, but not necessarily with the same self-awareness – the government in an uncharacteristically straight-talking (forgiving the pun) manifesto pledge and detoxification-of-the-Tory-brand-with-the-help-of-the-Lib-Dems kind of way; the CofE in a disingenuous chronic destructivist kind of way, like the nibbling of bed-bugs on the snuggled toes of sleeping traditionalists.

More squabbling

If the government were inclined to listen to the Church of England's contradictory ramblings, should it listen to heavyweights who have already proved troublesome on the red benches in fighting to keep

clergy stipends well below welfare benefits, or should it listen to a fresh crop of vision-errors (being the collective noun for the latest Anglican bantamweights)? Mr Speaker's Chaplain is sure to know what to do and, no doubt on *Today*, will tell people where to go. Ms Featherstone, the minister responsible, has no need of vestigial old men in chimeres in the House of Lords to carry her legislative will, so the Church of England will spit and ramble toothlessly to itself in yet another bitter and acrimonious matron-baiting squabble over the Garibaldis.

Get ready for T-shirts, aprons and umbrellas being paraded in Dean's Yard – 'Knotting the knot will not do' or 'A couple's place is in the town hall.'

End the charade

There really is only one way forward, that is to accept the will of the Parliament (as being the will of Parliament and nothing else), but to relinquish rights to rites. In other words, the time is come to end the anachronistic charade of clergy masquerading as registrars. Let the people come, if they wish, to solemnize their nuptials in the presence of God and his Church, but not before they have first visited a bureaucrat in a disagreeable and ill-appointed suite of offices to register their contractual arrangement. Thus the Church of England will at least be spared the need to froth, fret and flagellate itself as to the distinction between law and grace, convention and sacrament. Couples of whatever gender and permutation (nature is so restrictive in providing so few, but be sure the government can legislate to change that), having signed on the line elsewhere, need present no risk to the pusillanimous parson, who would prefer theological anarchy rather than be arraigned before the European Court of Human Rights because of subscribing to some absurdly outdated religious principle. God forbid. **ND**