



What is the Catholic Movement for?


Philip North considers the importance of the Catholic Movement in the life of the Church




Lee, former Civil Servant




Ben who has worked in Jerusalem




Nick from the NHS




Alex, former teacher




Guy who has worked in I.T.




Sean, former student




Mischea looking forward to serving



Chris from marketing & communications




Tom, one time brewer



Daniel, former lay chaplain
Liverpool Hope Uni

Also in this issue:

- Praying for Vocations
- The Bishop of Richborough on Teresa of Avila
- The Society of the Holy Cross



Chris, former student.

parish directory

BARRY St Mary's, Holton Road, near rail, bus and town centre *Credo Gyrnu (Ff Wales)* Sunday: Solemn Mass 8am and 11am, Sunday Club 11am; **St Cadoc's, Coldbrook Road** Sunday: Solemn Mass 9.30am, Vespers 6pm Saturday Benediction 1st Saturday of the month. Parish Priest: Fr Ben Andrews ssc 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 01424 210 785

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 - 2001) 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, 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 ABC *Forward in Faith, SSWSH Parish*. 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 Richmond*. 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, last week of the month: Choral Evensong. Parish office 01202 766772. Email: stambrosechurch@btinternet.com

BOURNEMOUTH St Francis of Assisi, Chaminster Road (corner of East Way) *A Forward in Faith Parish under the care of the Bishop of Richmond*. *Resolutions ABC*. Sunday: 8am Low Mass, Parish Mass 10am, Evening Service 6.30pm - first Sunday of each month and major festivals. For information about all services during the Interregnum contact Barbara Geatrell 01425 470370 or Dean Quinton 01425 672601 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.st.chads.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

BRIGHTON WAGNER GROUP The Annunciation (11am) Fr Michael Wells 01273 681431. **St Bartholomew's** (11am) Fr. David Clues 01273 620491. **St Martin's** (10am) Fr Trevor Buxton 01273 604687. **St Michael's** (10.30am) Fr Robert Fayers 01273 727362. **St Patrick's** (10.30am) Fr Steven Underdown 01273 747889. **St Paul's** (11am) Fr Robert Fayers 01273 727362. (Sunday Principal Mass times in brackets.)

BRISTOL All Saints, Pembroke Road, Clifton (near zoo and suspension bridge) Sunday: 8am Mass, 9.30am Family service (Mass 2nd and 4th Sunday), 11am Solemn Mass (children's group), 6pm Evening Service with Benediction. Feast days: 7.30pm Solemn

Mass. Daily Mass. Confessions: Saturday 11.30am, 5.30pm or by arrangement. *Resolutions ABC (Ebbsfleet)*. Information, appointments: Fr Richard Hoyall 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). During Interregnum contact Roger Metcalfe, Churchwarden on 01275 332851 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. Priest in Charge Fr Christopher Kinch 01179 712 496

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



CARDIFF St Mary, Bute Street - near rail, bus, Millennium Stadium, city centre and Bay Daily Mass; *Credo Gyrnu*. Sunday: Solemn Mass 11am; **St Dyfrig and St Samson, Pentre Gardens** Sunday: Solemn Mass 9.30am; **St Paul, Paget Street, Grangetown** Family Eucharist 10am. Parish Priest: Fr Graham Francis 02920 487777. Associate Priest: Fr David Morris 0292 22 2177

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 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 Richmond*. 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 Richmond*. Sunday: Mass 9am, Parish Mass 10.30am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction 6pm. Weekday Mass: Wed 9.30am. Contact Mr T Jones 01472 871673

HARTLEPOOL St Oswald's, Brougham Terrace. *A Forward in Faith Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley*. 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, Ff.* 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 Lockett 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 (Ff & 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 rector@stmagnusmartyr.org.uk

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, Resolution A,B & C, modern catholic parish*. Sunday: Every Sunday: Said Mass 9.00am and Sung Mass 10.30am with Junior Church. Weekdays: Tues to Fri 12 noon Angelus and Mass. Saturday Mass 10am. For the Sacrament of Reconciliation and other enquires contact Fr Richard Bolton at rdeb2010@btinternet.com or phone 0208 364 1583

London NW9 Kingsbury St Andrew *A Ff Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham* Sunday: Mass at 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 10am, Tues 6.30pm, Wed 12.15pm, Fri 6.30pm, Sat 10am Parish Priest: Fr Peter Hudson 07908 640369

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 Bermondsey/Canada Water/Rotherhithe Overground. Visitors most welcome. Fr Mark Nicholls ssc 0207 394 3394 www.stmaryrotherhithe.org

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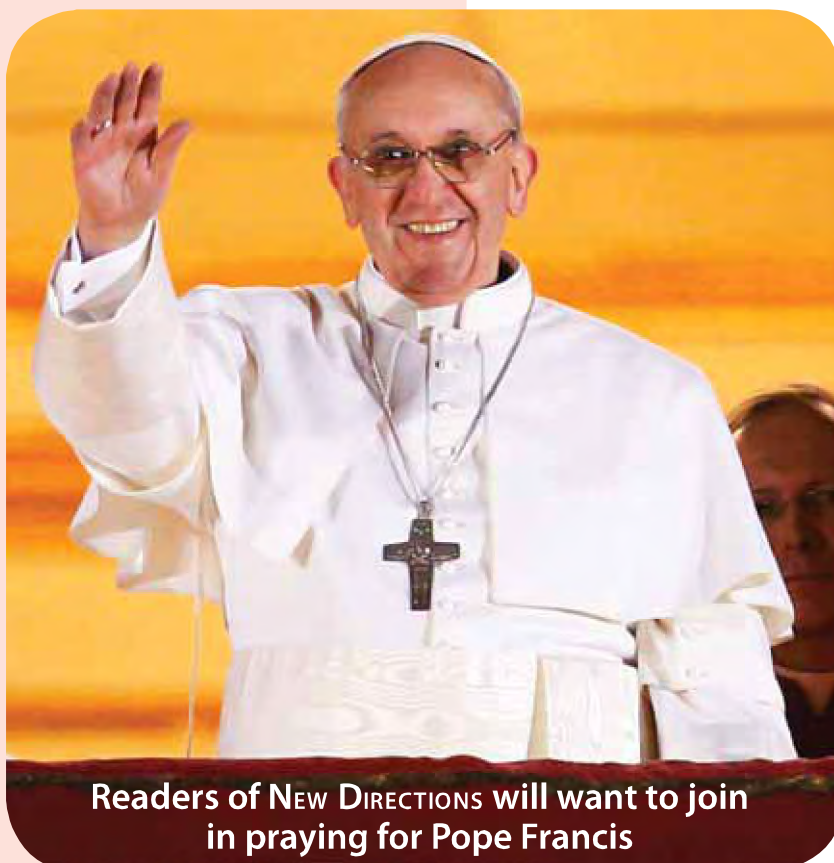
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Readers of NEW DIRECTIONS will want to join in praying for Pope Francis

LEAD STORY

What is the Catholic Movement for?

Philip North on the gifts that the Catholic Movement can share with the wider Church

because
we
understand
the
power
of the
Sacraments,
we offer
the Church
a proper
view of
Christian
priesthood

That is the question I want to ask in this article, and I aim to do so in a way that will at times be deliberately provocative. Because we are reaching a crunch point as Anglo-Catholics, a time when we will need to make big and honest decisions about our ecclesial future.

Staying as we are is not an option. So what is the point of having us now? What does our tradition have to offer the wider Church? What gifts can we present? Let me identify a few themes in order to start a conversation.

True identity

The *first* is that we are guardians of the truth of the ecclesiological identity of the Church of England. We witness to its true identity as part of the universal Catholic Church of God. The heart of our message remains the same as it has ever been. There are some who would say that we have lost that argument, that the Church of England has decided inexorably on another way of understanding itself and is firmly of the view that we are free, independent, Protestant, and that the General Synod and the House of Bishops has the authority unilaterally to make any decision it would like. If we believe that argument has indeed been lost, then we have no excuse for staying in the Church of England. Our position is a nonsense unless we are engaged with the debate and making the case for the Catholic identity of the Church of England.

Search for unity

And of course a vital part of that guardianship of the truth is a passion for the unity of Christ's Church. The extent to which parts of the Church of England have abandoned any serious commitment to the ecumenical agenda is absolutely chilling. We know that is true in terms of our relations with Rome – look at the polite disdain with which Cardinal Kaspar was treated when he warned the House of Bishops about the consequences of consecrating women bishops, look at the lukewarm reception of recent ARCIC reports, look at the misunderstanding that so often greets those who use the ecumenical argument in the debate about women bishops, look at the suspicion there still is towards the Roman Church in so many quarters.

I think most of us imagine that dialogue with the free and Protestant churches has been

favoured over dialogue with Rome, but I was with a group of ecumenical scholars a couple of weeks ago who were in equal despair about those conversations. The Methodist Covenant seems to have stalled. The last time the Synod discussed relationships with the URC we decided to have a service together which is a sure sign of ecumenical despair. The whole movement towards Church unity is in crisis. It is simply no longer a priority. And that is a scandal. It is a denial of the Gospel, for Christ prayed 'may they be one that the world might believe.'

There can be no effective mission unless it goes hand in hand with the search for visible unity expressed at the altar. Part of our vocation is to remind people of that truth, and in doing so we need to have conversations in two directions. First we need to be sure that we are doing all we can to keep alive relationships with the Roman Catholic Church at a local and an international level. Second, we need to be in constant conversation with our own church in order to go on trying to create the conditions required for ecumenical discussion. Only when the Anglican Church is aware of its Catholic identity will it feel any motivation for conversation and dialogue with Rome, and it is our task to keep that conversation alive. Even if it seems fruitless and our task in this regard unrewarding, it is our historic vocation to keep going. If we think the argument is lost once and for all, our self-justification is lost.

Theology of the Mass

The *second* gift that we have to offer the wider Church is a sacramental world view. Since the Parish Communion movement there has of course been a recovery of the sacramental life in the Church of England. The trouble is that a lot of the time those congregations who celebrate the sacraments do not really know exactly what they are doing.

The Mass is seen all too often as one option among many from the drop-down menu of worship possibilities, chosen because of the particular tastes of the priest and congregation rather than because of any searching after truth. As Anglo-Catholics, we celebrate the Mass not because we like it (though we do) but out of obedience to the will of God.

We celebrate it quite simply because that

is the primary way in which God invites us to worship him. Through the Mass the saving work of Christ is uniquely made effective in the present. Through the Mass, the Church is constituted, the Kingdom is proclaimed, God's people are fed and commissioned and all creation is sanctified. Our theology of the Mass drives our entire self-understanding and worldview. In a church where worship is usually determined by taste rather than obedience, it is our vocation to remind people of the primacy of the sacramental life.

Loss of confidence

Because we understand the power of the Sacraments, we offer the Church also a proper view of Christian priesthood. Priests are essential because without the priest there is no sacrament and if there is no sacrament there is no Church and no salvation. To quote St Vincent de Paul, 'The success of Christianity depends on priests.' Yet in the contemporary Church of England and in the nation at large we have rather lost confidence in priesthood. When dealing with those who are exploring Ordination I am surprised at how many of them have had to deal with misunderstanding or even opposition from parents and close family. Ordination was once seen as a means of climbing up the social ladder. Today the opposite is the case. Proud parents often see their children's Ordination as a waste of their lives, a throwing away of the educational opportunities that they have striven to give them. We have to accept also that priesthood culturally is in some

contexts seen as synonymous with child abuse. I was walking through a social housing estate in Euston last year when two sweet little girls high up in a balcony waved down to me. 'Hello, Father,' said one. 'Paedophile!' shouted the other. Their mother barely even looked up.

A culture which mistrusts institutions and which is apathetic of its past will often claim to have no time for an institutional priesthood. And that loss of trust and confidence extends right into the Church. I am a white, middle-class, middle-aged professional priest about halfway through my ordained life, and as such I am used to being presented as the problem. People like me tend to be seen either as an expensive luxury which the Church can barely continue to subsidize, or as part of a hierarchical cabal holding back the gifts and talents of the laity. Priests are very often perceived as bad news – we need renewing and sorting out. We are a problem that needs solving. We are told that our job can be done just as well and much more cheaply by lay volunteers.

A balanced view

Meanwhile, all too often, clergy labour away in their parishes, working hours that damage their marriages and disillusion their children, madly juggling the roles of preacher, teacher, caretaker, administrator, fundraiser, counsellor, youth-worker and patcher-up of damaged egos, and all too often end up isolated and drifting with very little idea of what they are meant to be doing. They have forgotten what they are for. As Anglo-Catholics we can offer the wider Church a proper and balanced view of priesthood precisely because we see it in the correct context of a sacramental view of the world. And the interesting thing about this is that people seem ready and willing to listen.

I was invited a few months ago to speak to a group of clergy at Holy Trinity Brompton about the Mass because they have taken on a church with a sacramental congregation. I was expecting a walloping and a re-fighting of the battles of the Reformation. Not a bit of it. They were fascinated and moved by what I had to say. Parts of the evangelical movement are looking very closely at what it means to deepen faith and in so doing they are exploring the sacramental life. If we are up for the conversation, we have a great deal to offer.

There is also a tremendous sense of relief when someone stands up for priesthood. Last week I was with a very mixed group from the Diocese of Europe and I quoted to them the logo of the ACS – Passionate about Priesthood. I said we should all be passionate about priesthood, that the days of running down the priestly vocation in the interests of shared or collaborative ministry must come to an end, that the vocation

we know
how to
offer
worship
which
is both
dignified
and
numinous
and yet
human
enough
to engage
people

Vocations Sunday

21st
APRIL

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more vocations



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of the baptized can only be fully expressed when there is a priest to draw it out. The sense of relief in that room that I had said what is often seen as unsayable was palpable. We need to recover a proper and balanced vision of priesthood in the Church of England, and we are the ones who can lead that debate.

Imaginative worship

A *third* gift related to the above is what we are able to offer with regard to the proper ordering of public worship. When I visit other churches, the thing that amazes me most is not that so few people go to church but that so many go. Too much public worship in this country is inept, unimaginative, banal and pointless, and I am sure we all have stories we could tell to illustrate the point. *Common Worship* was meant to transform everything, but sadly it has had rather the opposite effect because, except for the odd liturgical groupie, nobody understands the books.

Let's face it, at our best we know how to do it. We know how to offer worship which is both dignified and numinous and yet human enough to meet needs and engage people. We know how to produce literature and orders of service which means that people can involve themselves in the Eucharist and follow the liturgy without requiring a degree in librarianship. We know how to show confidence in the Mass, a genuine belief that what we are doing matters and is changing people and God's world. We know how to order spaces and beautify buildings and plan dignified ceremonial. We can be enormously imaginative and broad in our use of music in worship. Our movement has some first-rate preachers who can put across sharp, challenging and relevant messages without banging on all day. If the Church of England is serious about improving the quality of what is offered in churches on Sundays, we have a great deal to offer.

Ministry to the poor

A *fourth* gift is the long tradition we have as Anglo-Catholics of ministering in areas of poverty and social deprivation. When I was at Walsingham and was doing a great deal of preaching round the country, I found a failsafe method of finding the Anglo-Catholic parish in an unfamiliar town. You just head for the poorest part. Look behind the station or in the red light district or on the roughest council estate you can find. And once you arrive at those churches, our congregations are local and reflect the community. We don't bus in the middle classes, but rather we serve local people. We are ministering to vulnerable adults, to ethnic minority groups, to those with mental health problems, to the neglected and the sidelined and the broken.

We have years of expertise and experience in the area of community ministry and working with the voluntary sector to improve the lives of the poorest. Churches of our tradition are deeply involved in schools, in homeless projects and in countless other forms of service and regeneration initiatives. Our clergy know how to cope with the pressures and challenges of inner-city life and how to negotiate the complexities of working with other faiths. Our movement

has a long and proud history of locating itself where human need is greatest. Today that is a huge strength because care for the poor is such an obvious Gospel priority. And it is a great weakness because it means we are under-funded, under-resourced and vulnerable to pastoral reorganization by a church which is forgetting how to pay anything but lip-service to the bias to the poor.

But our love of the poor is a wonderful gift that we have to offer and one about which we need to be much more confident and bold. Again we have a great deal to offer the evangelical world in this respect. Many evangelical churches have become acutely aware of the charge laid against them that they are a white, professional, middle-class, graduate movement and they are desperately longing for ways to offer service to poorer communities and for a theological underpinning to such work.

Lived experience

I was very intrigued by a seminar on the riots that was part of a church conference I attended earlier this year. The panel comprised five white, middle-class men all talking about the need for parenting classes and better schools. It was a classic example of the middle classes seeking to improve the lives

of the poor by imposing upon them their own lifestyles and values. Be like us and all will be well, was the subconscious message.

That sort of event would be unthinkable from our own movement because our incarnational theology means that we have a much deeper and lived experience of the pressures on urban communities and so instinctively see things from the point of view of local people. Compare that seminar with the remarkable work that Fr Simon Morris has done in Tottenham as part of a people's panel exploring the causes of the riots and finding solutions which are locally led and non-patronizing. That sort of incarnational approach to community development is in our bloodstream. We do not even know we are doing it, but it is something that the wider Church would long to learn.

Sacrament of Confession

A *fifth* and final gift I would identify is a disciplined, devotional life. Of course any of us could bang on all day about this one, so let me point out two aspects of the Catholic spiritual life that seem in particular to have something to offer the wider Church. The first is the Sacrament of Confession. I was profoundly struck when I was at Walsingham by the evangelistic impact of the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, especially among the young. At the Youth Pilgrimage, for example, we would frequently have priests on duty for much of the night hearing the confessions of urban teenagers, many bringing to the box highly complex and challenging issues and problems. The same would occur at the Adoremus pilgrimage for young adults when almost everybody there would avail themselves of the opportunity to make their confession.

Their parents' generation has all sorts of negative prejudices against confession – that it is all about control and rebuke and condemnation. That is not how young people see it at all. For them, the chance to talk openly and

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confidentially to a skilled and understanding adult about their deepest problems and then to hear words of forgiveness spoken with authority and a new start proclaimed was a gift of unimaginable beauty. And all for free! They could not believe their luck.

Converting experience

For those young people, the Confession was often a converting experience, part of the process of beginning a lifelong journey with Christ. For others it is a means of deepening

faith, of dealing with sin, of ensuring that devotional practice is not about woolly self-indulgence but has a hard and challenging edge, a reminder that the Gospel is not another self-help, feel-good product but is all about the messy and serious business of working out our salvation.

It is a fantastic gift. And it is one the wider Church has either forgotten or sees in terms of embarrassment. A friend of mine went to a northern cathedral one Shrove Tuesday and asked to see the duty chaplain to make his Confession. He waited for forty minutes and was then told that the chaplain had been called away. In other words he ran away from a pastoral situation he did not have the resources to handle.

The *Common Worship* rite for the individual confession of penitents is a sad expression of the Church of England's failure to understand this gift. So embarrassed is it by the

priestly gift of proclaiming forgiveness that, in the course of a rite lasting several pages, the priest and penitent make their confession together. This really is a gift we have the responsibility to explain, teach and celebrate with the wider Church.

Devotion to Mary

Another aspect of the devotional life which we can share is the proper place of Mary within the Christian life. The rather depressing debate in Synod on 'Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ' showed the level of Protestant prejudice which still surrounds the Mother of God in our tradition.

For some, honouring her is seen as an idolatrous de-throning of her Son. For others she is a symbol of female repression and the patriarchal Church that so much needs to be reformed and revolutionized. Yet as we know a devotion to Mary is profoundly enriching for any Christian, whatever their tradition. She brings the feminine into what can otherwise be a very male faith. She models for us the Christian life and faithful response to Jesus. She shows us how to evangelize and share her child with the world. She prays with us and is for countless people a very intimate companion on the Christian journey. A proper and scriptural devotion to Mary is a wonderful gift that we can offer the Church of England.

Next month I will consider how we can take these gifts and offer them to the Church for the future. **ND**

I was profoundly struck by the evangelistic impact of the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation



The Children's Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham

Faith in art

Denis Desert on a Lenten art exhibition that allows us to reflect on contrasting interpretations of biblical themes

The Puritan wreckers of the sixteenth century robbed Christians of that period of something vital to faith – the visual. Rood screens were torn down, reredos and altars were destroyed, statuary smashed, murals were whitened. All that enhanced the faith was removed in the mistaken understanding that the visual led to idolatry. But, to my understanding, faith needs to be supported, informed and encouraged through colour, beauty and the work of inspired artists.



It was with this understanding in mind that I taught a course some years ago at my local Retirement Education Centre on *Faith in Art*. I based the course on the life and ministry of Christ from the Annunciation to Pentecost using art slides of works by artists over the ages, from the icons of the fourth century through to modern artists. We viewed the interpretations of, say, El Greco, who trained as an iconographer in his native Greece, and that inspirational Jewish Hasidic artist Marc Chagall.


At St Paul's Bedford, where I serve as an honorary assistant, we have set up in conjunction with our Lent course an exhibition: *Seeing Salvation*. It draws on much of the material I used in *Faith in Art*. There are twelve sections, starting with the Creation, going through the life of Christ, and ending with an opportunity

for reflection in which the viewer sees Dali's wonderful work *Girl at a Window* in which the subject gazes out over an inlet on which dusk is falling.

Throughout the exhibition we have tried to provide contrast between the works. So we have the 1450 work of della Francesca of the baptism of Christ set against Stanley Spencer's work of 1952 in which the baptism takes place in a contemporary lido. In the Gethsemane section we have El Greco's *Agony in the Garden* and Dinah Kendall's modern interpretation. For

the Ascension we used Rembrandt's inspirational work of 1636 and Dali's surrealistic interpretation in which Christ appears to disappear into a sunflower.

The exhibition was produced by a graphic artist in the congregation who downloaded the material online, had the pictures copied in colour and mounted on board.

The exhibition remained in place throughout Lent and has attracted many viewers. It is clear to me that one of the ways the faith can be conveyed to our 'post modern' world is through the eye and imagination. It may well be that some ND readers might be interested in using the material either in digital form or, if close to Bedford, the mounted work itself. If you are interested, get in touch with me, denisdesert@ntlworld.com, tel. 01234 211413. 

All shook up

As the CofE disintegrates, folk who haven't already departed for the Ordinate or the Strict Baptists, seek the 'blue remembered hills' of The English Missal or the North End stand and want books to guide their journey.

Nostalgia reigns. But today, not just for old church paths. 'Any books about Graceland?' – a frequent enquiry from pilgrims hoping to visit Elvis' shrine. Second only for FiF supporters to Walsingham. Fortunately I've made both pilgrimages. For those seeking to visit Memphis, a pilgrim hymn celebrating the 60th anniversary of 'the King's' Coronation – April 1953 – his concert debut.

Elvis lives

It's many years since we lost Elvis
That's if he's really dead.
He's been sighted in so many places,
From Alaska right down to the Med.

Some say he's still at his Graceland
Concealed in the mansion's top floor
Looking out through the windows
At the folk who crowd through the door.

Laughing with his Memphis mafia
Or singing an old Gospel song
But don't think that he supports ECUSA
He thinks that they've got it real wrong.

Billy Graham once didn't like Elvis
But he soon firmly changed his views.
When he heard the latest from Kendrick
Bill said 'Gimme Elvis and the Blues.'

Computers to Elvis' right hand
Adding up the cash while he sits.
From the folk who visit his mansion
And buy his re-issued great hits.

FiFers, of course, have all the records.
It's truly a marvellous stock.
Hound Dog, Lonesome, King Creole
Teddy Bear, and, of course, *Jailhouse Rock*.

But the likeliest sighting so far
It really has to be said.
Is of Elvis in your local Tesco's
Where he works away baking the bread.

Don't mock this hopeful conjecture
With laughs and a scornful hoot.
Elvis blends in well with the bakers
When he's wearing his trade mark jump suit.

Alan Edwards

In this sign conquer

Nicolas Spicer ssc on the aims and activities of the Society of the Holy Cross

It is a great privilege to have been elected by the priests of the Society of the Holy Cross (SSC, Societas Sanctae Crucis) to be Provincial Master for England & Scotland (which includes a number of priests in the Channel Islands, Europe and South Africa). I look forward to working with other Catholic Societies, especially the Federation of Catholic Priests over the next few years.

Serving God

Blessed John Henry Newman said 'Bloom where you are planted' and the aim of the Society has always been to provide a secure foundation for her members to do just that. In parishes, chaplaincies and the communities they have retired to, the Brothers seek to be faithful Catholics and so know a personal satisfaction and so channel blessings into the Church and world. SSC priests are still called to be part of the lives of congregations and communities, often at great personal sacrifice.

This has always been the SSC way. The founding Fathers (and the Sisters who worked with them) bloomed when they stayed in their parishes when cholera was raging. The people realized that these priests were not just High Church, but that how they worshipped God in church translated itself into serving God in the parish.

Rule of life

When a new Master is elected, all the brethren renew their promise to keep the Rule of the Society, and, through the saving power of the Cross, impressed inwardly upon their lives and revealed outwardly in their work, to bring others to know God's love and truth.

Our Rule of life helps us to strive to deepen union with our Lord by regular prayer and frequent resort

to the Sacraments and to the Holy Scriptures, carefully teaching and encouraging the same among the people to whom we minister.

We regard the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as the centre and source of our priestly ministry, and meditate frequently on the Cross and Passion of our Lord. We endeavour to cultivate, both in ourselves and others, a lively sense of the communion of saints, practising and teaching devotion to the saints, especially to our Blessed Lady, and prayer for the departed. We do all in our power to support other priests in their ministry, whether members

**we regard the Holy
Sacrifice of the Mass as
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our priestly ministry**



of the Society or not, avoiding criticizing them or in any other way compromising the dignity of the priesthood.

Encouragement

To help us in this we meet regularly in small groups, gatherings of faithful Catholic priests working in the Church of England and

the Episcopal Church of Scotland, to worship our loving Father, to encourage each other with a little food and drink, receive some information about how we can shape our ministries in a hopeful future and no doubt experience some good Catholic brotherly banter.

We try to make them safe places where each of us can enjoy the freedom to be ourselves and find encouragement and support. They are occasions when we can step aside for a while from the pressures of parish and wider Church life and so be opportunities for reflection and



perhaps realigning our perspectives.

Pusey Guild

Men who are in training for the priesthood who share our aims can be admitted to the Pusey Guild, which similarly has a Rule of Life and meets regularly. You will recognize a priest of the Society by the small cross he wears pinned on his jacket or cassock. A church or chaplaincy served by a Brother will have a notice on the door or in the porch. Please pray for me as I begin this new ministry, pray for all the Brothers, especially those very much experiencing being at the foot of the Cross. Please pray for those at colleges and on courses.

Looking up

You will hear talk of 'digging a pit for the Cross', which is a faithful way of expressing how we see our priesthood today. That can seem rather lonely (which of course it can be) so I am encouraging the brethren to look up and see the instrument of the Father's merciful love; to look out of the pit and see beside them Our Lady and take some comfort in her maternal care; to see too, standing near, quietly and faithfully, the young St John. And then all around them, standing, or kneeling, or sitting, or simply lying (we have number of infirm members), their brothers of the Society with their congregations and communities. In that fellowship we strive to conquer! In that unity we can conquer! In that saving power of the cross, impressed inwardly in our lives and revealed outwardly in our work, we can all conquer!

faith of our fathers

Arthur Middleton on the Sacraments as signs

The devaluation of the Sacraments in the Church was foreseen some 50 years ago when the Professor of Moral and Social Theology at King's College London, Canon G.R. Dunstan, posed the question 'And what have the righteous done?', claiming that the character of Anglican Christianity was being radically changed by ecclesiastical manipulation and that the Eucharist had become at best a children's service, at worst a psycho-social manipulation, a pale paradigm of the cocktail party, in which we work up warm feelings for one another, shake hands, wave and say 'Hi.'

More recently in 2009 a similar critique was made at a conference, 'Returning to the Church,' at St Stephen's House. There was a strong feeling of disenfranchisement, of a disconnect between classic Anglicanism and the growing orthodoxy of Fresh Expressions, and, in particular, of the way in which the 'mixed economy' idea sanctions part of the Church floating free from Anglican norms.

The rites of the Church and the greater feasts of the liturgical year are intended to be an unfailing means, not only for transmitting the grace of the Sacraments, but also for instructing

the faithful in their meaning and in the meaning of the whole Christian life. Sadly, the faithful have lost familiarity both with the scriptural types and figures required for doing so and with the significance given to these types and figures by Christ himself, by the Apostles, and by the Fathers. In the Fifties Daniélou published *The Bible and the Liturgy* (still in print) which should be studied in depth by theological colleges and regional courses.

His concern is that today we study the efficacious causality of the sacraments, but we pay very little attention to their nature as *signs*. This question of the sacraments as signs is of fundamental importance for pastoral liturgy. Because they are not understood, the rites of the sacraments often seem to the faithful to be artificial and capable of being trivialized. Daniélou's study is based essentially on the teaching of the first Christian centuries, and consists of an interpretation of the symbolism of Christian worship according to the Fathers of the Church.

Biblical symbolism

Before studying these patristic interpretations, Daniélou defines the

principles which inspired them. This symbolism constitutes a common tradition going back to the apostolic age, and what is striking about it is its biblical character. All the figures are taken from the Holy Scriptures – Adam in Paradise, Noah in the ark, Moses crossing the Red Sea – these are the images used for the sacraments. Daniélou's concern is to make clear the meaning and origin of this biblical symbolism and that the Sacraments have their roots in the liturgy of Judaism and not in Hellenistic culture. That the realities of the Old Testament are figures of those of the New is one of the principles of biblical theology. This science of the similitudes between the two Testaments is called *typology*, and its foundation is to be found in the Old Testament itself.

Means of communication

So Jesus is the New Adam with whom the paradise of the future has begun with the destruction of the sinful world of which the Flood was the figure. In him is accomplished the true Exodus of the people of God from the tyranny of the demon. The Apostles used this argument in their preaching to show that God's activity continues beyond the Old Testament not only in the Person of Christ but in the Church as well. The sacraments carry on in the Church the great works of God and show us the same divine activity as carried out in the different eras of sacred history, and all phases of God's action are all ordered to the Judgement at the end of time.

The sacraments therefore are not replaceable assets. As signs they communicate the life of what they symbolize, for the word 'symbol' means that they participate in the reality of what they symbolize and communicate the divine life, salvation-life. They are the means in which the life of God operates. To divest them of their biblical culture and liturgical expression and celebrate them according to the changing fashions of the modern world is to destroy them as *signs*. In themselves and on their own, they are our most powerful means of the communication of the great works of God. **ND**



A free province is born

Bishop John Fenwick on the significance of the CofE's recognition of the Orders of the Free Church of England

Something extraordinary happened at the end of 2012 – the Church of England legally recognized the existence of another Anglican Church within the Provinces of Canterbury and York. The announcement by the Church of England Press Office that the Archbishops of Canterbury and York had ‘recognized and accepted’ the Orders of the Free Church of England under the Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967 seems to have attracted relatively little comment. It has, however, significantly changed the ecclesiastical situation in this country. It could be a ‘game changer’.

Long history

It may surprise many who as yet know little or nothing about the Free Church of England (FCE) to learn that there is a long history of contacts – official and unofficial – between it and the Church of England, going back to the 1870s.

There were ‘talks’, for example, in 1920 and in the 1990s. Archbishops of Canterbury have regularly encountered FCE bishops in their dealings with the Free Church Federal Council, and now via Churches Together in England. The 1998 Lambeth Conference encouraged Provinces of the Anglican Communion to explore contact with ‘Continuing’ Anglicans and this in part motivated the discussions that have led to the recent recognition.

Several years ago, in talks with FCE bishops, Archbishop Rowan agreed that the recognition of Orders was a discrete area which, if resolved, could provide a new context for relationships between the Churches.

There were face to face meetings and the FCE Bishop Primus was able to provide the Council for Christian Unity with statements about the FCE's understanding of ministerial priesthood, eucharistic doctrine, baptismal regeneration, etc. In the light of all the evidence, CCU and

the Faith and Order Commission recommended recognition of the FCE's Orders under the Measure. This was subsequently endorsed by the Standing Committee of the House of Bishops. It was not done lightly.

License to minister

The 1967 Measure is the means by which members of other Anglican Provinces overseas are given permission to minister within the Church of England. Thus a priest of, for example, The Episcopal Church or the Church of Kenya coming to this

**we do believe that,
under God, we may be part
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country may apply to the relevant archbishop for a license to minister, which may be without limit or for a specified period.

The priest in question does not ‘leave’ the Church in which they were ordained and ‘join’ the Church of England; they merely minister within it, with the option of returning to ministry in their parent Church in the future. Such an option is now available to deacons and presbyters of the Free Church of England. If suitably qualified they may apply to minister in the Established Church (including, presumably, taking an incumbency), then at a later date return to the FCE. There is ‘permeability’ between the Churches.

Episcopal ministry

The Measure also makes provision for episcopal ministry. Section 4 permits bishops of the FCE to ‘ordain persons and perform other episcopal functions’ at the invitation of a Diocesan bishop, subject to the consent of the relevant archbishop. Person so ordained are legally deemed

to have been ordained within the Church of England and not the FCE. ‘Other episcopal functions’ presumably includes confirmations and general episcopal oversight. In other words, bishops of the FCE can now act very much as PEVs.

It is already legally permissible for an FCE congregation to share a Church of England building, to enter into a Local Ecumenical Partnership and to participate in shared worship. To those opportunities there is now added recognition of a sacramentally assured ministry.

The effect of the Measure is to create a parallel jurisdiction within England – a *bona fide* Anglican Church with an all-male ministry, whose bishops in apostolic succession may, in addition to leading their own flocks in worship and mission, lawfully minister to congregations in the Church of England.

Those who believe that they can no longer in conscience continue as members of the Established Church now know that there is a recognized alternative to which they can transfer. Those who choose to remain in the Established Church but have difficulty accepting the ministrations of its bishops (and those who send their candidates to Africa for ordination) now know that there are other bishops to whom they can lawfully turn.

Providential

The Free Church of England is not a strident or confrontational Church. We simply want to preach the apostolic Gospel, administer the Sacraments, live the Catholic faith and win souls for Christ.

We view recent developments in the Established Church more with sorrow than anger, and we value the many good relationships that exist between us. But we do believe that, under God, we may be part of the solution to the present turmoils. It may be Providential that what is in effect a Free Province now exists in England. **ND**

devotional

St Ambrose

On the Eucharist

Now consider which is more excellent, the bread of angels [i.e. the manna] or the Flesh of Christ which is indeed the Body of life. That manna was from heaven; this is from above the heavens. The former was from heaven, the latter from the Lord of the heavens; the former was subject to corruption if it was preserved for a second day, the latter is foreign to all corruption so that whoever shall have piously tasted it will not be able to experience corruption. For the people of Israel water flowed from the rock; for you Blood flows from Christ. The water satisfied them for a while; Blood washes you for eternity. The Jew drinks and is thirsty again; when you drink you will not be able to thirst. The former was given as an image; the latter is given as the reality.

If that which you marvel at is an image, how much greater is the reality whose image you marvel at? Listen and learn that which was done for the Fathers was an image: 'They drank,' he says, 'from the rock following them, and the Rock was Christ; but with many of them God was not pleased, for they were laid low in the desert. These things moreover were done as a type for us' (1 Cor. 10.4–6). You have come to know the more excellent things, for the light is more excellent than

the shade, reality more excellent than image, the Body of the Giver more excellent than the manna from heaven.

Perhaps you will say, 'What I see is different from what you speak of; how is it that you assert that I receive the Body of Christ?' And so it still remains for us to prove this...

[Ambrose then cites the examples of Moses in Exodus 15 and of Elisha in 1 Kings 18, the former making the bitter water sweet by his blessing, the latter making the axe float on the water.] If a human blessing had such power so as to be able to change nature, what do we say about the divine Consecration itself in which the very words of Our Lord and Saviour are at work? For that Sacrament which you receive is brought about by the word of Christ. If the word of Elijah had such power as to call down fire from heaven, will not the word of Christ have the power to change the nature of the elements? You have read about the creation of the whole world: 'He spoke and they were made; he gave a command and they were created' (Ps. 33.9). Therefore can not the word of Christ, which was able to create out of nothing that which did not exist, change those things that do exist into that which they were not?...

The Lord himself cries out, 'This is my Body'. Before the blessing of the heavenly words, another species is named; after the Consecration the Body is signified. He himself says that it is his Blood. Before the Consecration it is called something else; after the Consecration it is named Blood. And you say, 'Amen,' which means 'it is true.' What the mouth speaks, let the soul confess internally; let the soul experience what speech proclaims.

From St Ambrose, On the Mysteries, edited by Arthur Middleton **ND**

There is no doubt that the advent of the printing press revolutionized the spirituality of western Europe. It was not only the availability of Scripture but the popularity of small books of devotions and collections of prayers that had an impact. The locus of spirituality moved away from the church and corporate worship to the home, the family and the individual's 'secret place'. We take for granted that we can have a 'pocket size' Bible or prayer book. Any day, every day prayer with the Church through the daily offices has become possible.

The impact of information technology on spirituality will no doubt become the topic for someone's PhD thesis in the not too distant future. There can be no doubt that the World Wide Web has had huge benefits in making available in the home and workplace myriad resources for prayer, reflection and study. But this way of prayer and reflection was rooted in one place – the office or the home. With the wide availability of access to the internet through wireless and smart phone technology, all these resources have become as portable as a pocket Bible.

I have found this to be invaluable. As

Ghostly Counsel

Prayer and technology

Andy Hawes is Warden of Edenhall Regional Retreat House

someone who uses the Book of Common Prayer for Morning and Evening Prayer, it is so easy to access the Daily Prayer section of the Church of England website. This is so much easier than carting around three books. So it is possible to pray Morning Prayer on a train, in a dentist's waiting room or sitting on a wall in the middle of the countryside. It is all very helpful – or is it?

I have heard the argument that 'something is better than nothing' when it comes to prayer. I'm sure that is right, but the second best thing is not the same as the very best thing. I can see that there is a real possibility that 'cyber' prayer will become the norm –

and that what was intended to be the consecration of time becomes an activity that is 'fitted in' around more important things. The possibilities of 'I pray' and other smartphone applications might be a way of sustaining prayer in an unsustainable lifestyle – in which case it might be asked, is it proper prayer at all? Behind that question lies a more fundamental one – is it possible to feed one's soul on the move at haphazard times? The wisdom of two centuries says 'it is not possible'.

The practice of 'cyber prayer' disposes of three of the four classic 'dispositions for prayer'; place, time and posture. This is in addition to the fact that it allows an individual to dodge the question: 'why can't I find the time for prayer that it is the offering of body, mind and spirit?' I predict that anyone who is totally dependent on 'cyber prayer' will find that other aspects of a 'rule of life' will soon unravel. Perhaps it is safer to stick with the printing press and forget the smartphone. It will be interesting to see how this new way of prayer develops. It does help to get to one's knees from time to time – quite difficult on the Tube!

Fresh expressions

Oliver Welsford on practical and spiritual rejuvenation at the Church of St Thomas the Martyr in Oxford

There are new signs of life at the Church of St Thomas the Martyr. At the beginning of the year, coverings which had prevented the parishioners of west Oxford from hearing the bells of their Church were removed, allowing them to call the people afresh to worship at this ancient house of prayer, which is beginning a time of practical and spiritual rejuvenation. This is being achieved co-operatively, with work shared between the congregation and clergy, led by the recently appointed parish priest Fr Jonathan Beswick, and a large group of ordinands from St Stephen's House, who together are developing a new vision for the church that is seeking to reinvigorate its parochial life and attention to pastoral care for all.

Redevelopment

The life and ministry of St Thomas' has suffered for a number of reasons over recent years, both a product of a changing local demography and a wider neglect to plan ahead for the future; but there has remained a small congregation of faithful people who have kept the flame alive, keeping the church open for weekly worship. Fr Beswick felt a call to serve the parish, with a strong sense of vocation to lead St Thomas' into a new time of missional opportunity and spiritual growth. Practical work has been undertaken to ensure the building is watertight and the churchyard is well maintained and tidy.

This is part of a wider plan to redevelop the whole site, by exploring new partnerships with other institutions in the area, such as the parish's day nursery, and also planning the future use of the parish rooms. Although currently in a poor state of repair, these will become the site of a new house of formation, accommodating those exploring vocations to the priesthood and religious life, by offering opportunities of involvement in the local community. Getting the place open and making it visible (and noisy!) again has been seen as essential in raising its profile, by consolidating the 'village church' feel, as a way of seeking to know more of what God is asking of us.

Contemporary worship

The work undertaken by the ordinands is therefore part of a larger vision; helping to develop contemporary worship in a context that appreciates St Thomas' Catholic tradition. Drawing on the successes of contemporary worship used at

Walsingham among other places, the ordinands have sought to produce services which engage with the Catholic and charismatic tradition, a new style of worship that engages with a city that has churches and chapels on every street corner. The Sunday afternoon worship began in the autumn term of last year; prayer before the Blessed Sacrament helped the group to discern the needs of the parish more

clearly, and in the New Year the group developed a pattern of worship which began with a time of hospitality, before gathering together for contemplative devotion, our themes chosen by the lectionary readings.

Imaginative

The group has tried to use the space as imaginatively as possible and previous weeks have seen the construction of a Synagogue scene, to illustrate the readings from St Luke which recalled the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. As these services are presently during term-time, our worship is now focusing on the events at the end of our Lenten journey, leading up to the crucifixion of Christ. The biblical narrative lends itself to an effective use of multi-media resources, such as a plasma screen displaying images on the high altar, to complement worship, which leaves plenty of space for people to reflect individually and engage with God.

Organic growth

St Thomas' is dedicated to a great English saint; indeed St Thomas Becket himself walked on the ground where the church now stands. With this in mind, we should see our own place in this Communion of Saints, a spiritual union of members in Christ's body on earth and in heaven, trusting that our heavenly patron is interceding for us. The challenge in this new work has been to identify our labours with this much greater labour, of seeing our work as the start of the journey rather than the attempt to reach a destination. Rather than relying on church planting from a more 'successful' congregation, St Thomas' prays for a growth which is organic, grounded in the incarnation, and therefore in the local parish, and ultimately sustainable.

We give thanks to God that there have been promising green shoots growing, the first fruits of prayer and collaboration, and many have recognized the potential to revive the fortunes of this church as a teacher of the Christian faith in the modern world. **ND**



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Tu es Petrus!

To mark the inauguration of the ministry of **His Holiness Pope Francis** we reproduce here his homily at his inauguration Mass

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I thank the Lord that I can celebrate this Holy Mass for the inauguration of my Petrine ministry on the solemnity of St Joseph, the spouse of the Virgin Mary and the patron of the universal Church. It is a significant coincidence, and it is also the name-day of my venerable predecessor: we are close to him with our prayers, full of affection and gratitude.

I offer a warm greeting to my brother cardinals and bishops, the priests, deacons, men and women religious, and all the lay faithful. I thank the representatives of the other churches and ecclesial communities, as well as the representatives of the Jewish community and the other religious communities, for their presence. My cordial greetings go to the Heads of State and Government, the members of the official Delegations from many countries throughout the world, and the Diplomatic Corps.

Utter fidelity

In the Gospel we heard that 'Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife' (Mt. 1.24). These words already point to the mission which God entrusts to Joseph: he is to be the *custos*, the protector. The protector of whom? Of Mary and Jesus; but this protection is then extended to the Church, as Blessed John Paul II pointed out: 'Just as Saint Joseph took loving care of Mary and gladly dedicated himself to Jesus Christ's upbringing, he likewise watches over and protects Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, of which the Virgin Mary is the exemplar and model' (*Redemptoris Custos*, 1).

How does Joseph exercise his role as protector? Discreetly, humbly and silently, but with an unfailing presence and utter fidelity, even when he finds it hard to understand. From the time of his betrothal to Mary until the finding of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem, he is there at every moment with loving care. As

the spouse of Mary, he is at her side in good times and bad, on the journey to Bethlehem for the census and in the anxious and joyful hours when she gave birth; amid the drama of the flight into Egypt and during the frantic search for their child in the Temple; and later in the day-to-day life of the home of Nazareth, in the workshop where he taught his trade to Jesus.

Constantly attentive

How does Joseph respond to his calling to be the protector of Mary, Jesus and the Church? By being

**let us protect Christ
in our lives, so that
we can protect others,
so that we can
protect creation**

constantly attentive to God, open to the signs of God's presence and receptive to God's plans, and not simply to his own. This is what God asked of David, as we heard in the first reading. God does not want a house built by men, but faithfulness to his word, to his plan. It is God himself who builds the house, but from living stones sealed by his Spirit. Joseph is a 'protector' because he is able to hear God's voice and be guided by his will; and for this reason he is all the more sensitive to the persons entrusted to his safekeeping. He can look at things realistically, he is in touch with his surroundings, he can make truly wise decisions. In him, dear friends, we learn how to respond to God's call, readily and willingly, but we also see the core of the Christian vocation, which is Christ! Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation!

The vocation of being a 'protector', however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also

has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live.

Simply human

It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives first protect one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, and children themselves, in time, protect their parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness.

Our responsibility

In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts! Whenever human beings fail to live up to this responsibility, whenever we fail to care for creation and for our brothers and sisters, the way is opened to destruction and hearts are hardened. Tragically, in every period of history there are 'Herods' who plot death, wreak havoc, and mar the countenance of men and women.

Keeping watch

Please, I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be 'protectors' of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment. Let us not allow omens of destruction and death to accompany the advance of this world!

But to be 'protectors', we also have to keep watch over ourselves! Let us not forget that hatred, envy and pride

defile our lives! Being protectors, then, also means keeping watch over our emotions, over our hearts, because they are the seat of good and evil intentions: intentions that build up and tear down!

We must not be afraid of goodness or even tenderness! Here I would add one more thing: caring, protecting, demands goodness, it calls for a certain tenderness. In the Gospels, Saint Joseph appears as a strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love. We must not be afraid of goodness, of tenderness!

Service

Today, together with the feast of Saint Joseph, we are celebrating the beginning of the ministry of the new Bishop of Rome, the Successor of Peter, which also involves a certain power. Certainly, Jesus Christ conferred power upon Peter, but what sort of power was it? Jesus' three questions to Peter about love are followed by three commands: feed my lambs, feed my sheep. Let us never

forget that authentic power is service, and that the Pope too, when exercising power, must enter ever more fully into that service which has its radiant culmination on the Cross. He must be inspired by the lowly, concrete and faithful service which marked Saint

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Joseph and, like him, he must open his arms to protect all of God's people and embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison (cf. Mt. 25.31-46). Only those who serve with love are able to protect!

Light amid the darkness

In the second reading, Saint Paul

speaks of Abraham, who, 'hoping against hope, believed' (Rom. 4.18). Hoping against hope! Today too, amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others. To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope! For believers, for us Christians, like Abraham, like Saint Joseph, the hope that we bring is set against the horizon of God, which has opened up before us in Christ. It is a hope built on the rock which is God.

To protect Jesus with Mary, to protect the whole of creation, to protect each person, especially the poorest, to protect ourselves: this is a service that the Bishop of Rome is called to carry out, yet one to which all of us are called, so that the star of hope will shine brightly. Let us protect with love all that God has given us! I implore the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, Saints Peter and Paul, and Saint Francis, that the Holy Spirit may accompany my ministry, and I ask all of you to pray for me! Amen. 