# ewdirections

August 2014 £2.50

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## No Desertion! No Surrender!

Life with the legislation

#### Also in this issue:

- **Ordination Round-up**
- James Leigh on pilgrimage in Germany
- Betty Jarrett-stands at the foot of the Cross

## parish directory

BEXHILL on SEA St Augustine's, Cooden Drive, TN393AZ Sunday: Mass at 8am, Parish Mass with Junior Church at10am. Further details: Father Robert Coates ssc on 01424 210 785

BIRMINGHAM St Agatha, Stratford Road, Sparkbrook (B11 1QT) "If it is worth believing in, it is worth travelling for" Sunday Mass 11am. Secure Parking. Contact Churchwarden on 07854 147412

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 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 CliffRoad, BH48BE.

A Forward in Faith Parish, Resolutions ABC in place. Sunday: 8am Low Mass BCP, 10am Sung Mass Traditional Ceremonial, 6pm Evensong, 2nd Sunday of the month Choral Evensong with Benediction. Parish Priest Fr Adrian Pearce SSC 01202 911569; Parish office 01202 766772. Email: afpear2@gmail.com

**BOURNEMOUTH St Francis of Assisi**, Charminster 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 (Family Mass last Sunday of the Month), Evening Service 6.30pm - first Sunday of each month. Parish Priest :Fr David Wastie

www.stfrancis-bournemouth.org.uk

**BOVEY TRACEY St John the Evangelist** ABC, Forward in Faith, Under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet. Sunday: 10am High Mass. Low Mass 10am Tues and Thurs. Parish Priest: Fr Greg Stanton ssc 01925 051905

BOWBURN, Durham Christ the King, Forward in Faith, ABC. Sunday: 11am Sung Mass and Sunday School; Weekday Mass: Wed 9.30am, Fri 6.30pm; Evening Prayer and Benediction 5.30pm last Saturday of month; Parish Priest: Fr John Livesley ssc 01388 814817

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: Thur 10am. Enquiries should be made to the Churchwarden. Tel 01308 425375.

**BRIGHTON WAGNER GROUP The Annunciation** (11am) Fr Michael Wells 01273 681431. St Barthlomew's (11am) Fr. David Clues 01273 620491. St Martin's (10am) Fr Trevor Buxton 01273 604687. St Michael's (10.30am) Fr Robert Favers 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 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

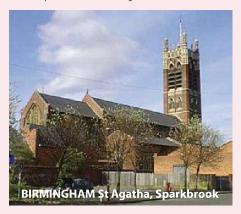
BROMLEY St George, Bickley Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Sung Mass 10.30am. Daily Masses: Tues 9.30am, Wed 10am, Thurs 10am, Fri 9.30am and 6.30pm, Sat 9.30am. Times of Confession and other information from Fr Owen Higgs on 020 8467 3809

**CARDIFF** near rail, bus, Millennium Stadium, city centre and Bay Daily Mass St Mary, Bute Street Sunday: Solemn Mass 11am; St Dyfrig and St Samson, Pentre Gardens Sunday: Solemn Mass 9.30am. Parish Priest: Fr Graham Francis 02920 487777. Associate Priest: Fr David Morris 029 2221 2177

CHARD The Good Shepherd, Furnham. Resolutions ABC Sunday: Sung Mass 9.45am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction (3rd Sunday only) 6pm. Weekday Masses: Tues 10am, Wed 6.30pm (with Healing and Reconciliation on the 4th Wed of the month). Contact: Fr Jeff Williams 01460 419527

www.churchofthegoodshepherd-chard.weebly.com

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



**CHOPWELL Saint John the Evangelist NE177AN Forward** in Faith Parish ABC. Sunday - Sung Mass 10am. Daily Office & Mass as displayed. Parish Priest: Fr Paul R Murray ssc 01207 561248 p.r.murray@durham.anglican.org

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

**CROYDON S Michael & All Angels**, Poplar Walk. FiF ABC. Sunday: Low Mass 8.00am, Family Mass 9.30am, High Mass 11.00am, Evensong & Benediction 3.30pm, Daily Mass Mon-Fri 12.30pm, also Wed 7.30am. Sat 11.00am. Fr Ian Brothwood 020 8686 9343

**DEVIZES St Peter's**, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire FiF Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet. All resolutions passed. Sunday: 10am Sung Mass. Wednesday 7pm Low Mass. Third Thursday in the Month 10am Low Mass. Mass on major festivals & Saints' Days - times vary. Contact during interregnum: Mrs. J. Hosie, Churchwarden 01 380

**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** ABC, A Forward in Faith Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: 8am Low Mass, 10.30am Solemn Mass.

Weekdays - Low Mass: Tues 7pm, Thur 12 noon. Contact Father David Adlington or Father David Goodburn ssc - tel: 01303 254472 www.stpeterschurchfolkestone.org.uk e-mail: 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: Parish Mass 9.45am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction 6pm (First Sunday). Weekday Mass: Wed 9.30am. Parish Priest: Fr.Martin 07736 711360

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 10am. 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. Wed, 7pm Exposition, 8pm Mass. First Sat of the month, 11.15am Mass of Our Lady of Walsingham. For further information phone Fr Martin Hislop: Parish Office 020 8974 8079 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-HEATHROW-HANWORTH TW13 St **George**, Hanworth Park, Feltham, TW13 7QF *Beautiful and historic* Church. Traditional worship. Vibrant parish social life - ABC Fulham Jurisdiction. Sunday: 8am Low Mass (English Missal), 10am High Mass (Traditional), 6pm Evensong and Latin Benediction (first Sunday of the Month). Low Mass 10am Tues and Thurs. Fr Paul Williamson: 0208 844 0475. Email: 1stewart1@live.co.uk

LONDON EC3 St Magnus the Martyr, LowerThames Street (nearest Tube: Monument or Bank) Resolutions ABC. Mass: Sunday 11am, refreshments following, Tues, Wed, 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 Parish 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 Reconcilliation and other enquires contact Fr Richard Bolton at rdeb2010@btinternet.com or phone 0208 364 1583

**LONDON** NW9 Kingsbury **St Andrew** A Fif Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham Sunday: Sung Mass 10am; , Thursday Said Mass 10am. Tube to Wembley Park then 83 Bus to Church Lane Churchwarden: 020 8205 7447

LONDON SE11 4BB St Agnes Kennington Park, St Agnes Place – 8 minutes walk from both Kennington and the Oval tube stations (Northern line) ABC/FinF. Sunday: 10am Solemn Mass. Daily Mass: Mon 10am; Tue s 5.30pm; Wed 10am; Thu 5.30pm; Fri 10am Bible Study after Mass on Wed. saintagneskenningtonpark. co.uk 020 7820 8050 frpaulensor@btconnect.com

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## The House of Bishops' Declaration: 1

In May Colin Podmore outlined the new provisions for those who cannot receive the ministry of women as priests and bishops. In June he looked at the Resolution of Disputes Procedure. This article begins to consider the contents of the House of Bishops' Declaration which will replace the Act of Synod.

#### The Introduction

The introduction stresses the bishops' responsibility to build up the Body of Christ, promote peace and reconciliation in the Church, and unite its members in truth and love. They have 'a duty to ensure that the welfare of the whole Church of England is sustained in all its theological depth and breadth' These responsibilities prompt them to make this Declaration.

#### House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (GS Misc 1076)

#### Introduction

- 1. The character and calling of the Church of England are set out in the Preface to the Declaration of Assent, which all clergy are required to make at ordination and subsequently on admission to any office. As part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church it is called to proclaim afresh in each generation the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds.
- 2. Those who serve the Church of England in holy orders are required to affirm their loyalty to this 'inheritance of faith' and bring 'the grace and truth of Christ to this generation.' Bishops have a particular responsibility to gather God's people and build up the Body of Christ. We have each promised at our consecration to promote peace and reconciliation in the Church and to seek to unite its members in a holy fellowship of truth and love.
- 3. The opening of all orders of ministry equally to women and men is a significant moment in the long history of this part of the Church Catholic. It brings with it new opportunities for building up the Body of Christ and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom.
- 4. It also brings with it a particular responsibility for us, as a House of Bishops. As well as seeking to channel and nurture the energy and renewal that will flow from this development we have a duty to ensure that the welfare of the whole Church of England is sustained in all its theological depth and breadth. We accordingly commend this declaration to all members of the Church of England so that the good gifts that God has given to all His people may be used to His glory.

#### **The Five Guiding Principles**

The Declaration adopts a new approach. In addition to specific obligations and rights (which are spelt out in somewhat more detail than in the Act of Synod), it enshrines five 'guiding principles' against which actions can be measured. They are printed in bold to highlight their importance. In the Declaration they are unnumbered bullet points: they are numbered here for ease of reference.

Principles 1 and 2 are those which require things of us – things that we ought to be able to give. Principles 3, 4 and 5 offer the basis for our future in the Church of England.

#### Statement of guiding principles

- 5. The House reaffirms the five guiding principles which it first commended in May 2013 when submitting legislative proposals to the General Synod for the consecration of women to the episcopate and which the Synod welcomed in its resolution of 20 November 2013. They need to be read one with the other and held together in tension, rather than being applied selectively:
  - [1] Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;
  - [2] Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;
  - [3] Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;
  - [4] Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests

- continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and
- [5] Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.

### Principle 1: 'True and lawful holders of the office which they occupy'

This principle states what the Church of England corporately holds, not what individual members of it may or may not believe. But in any case, it is not problematic.

To understand it correctly, we must bear in mind the distinction between office and order. With parish clergy this is easy, because the names are different. 'Rector,' 'vicar,' 'priest in charge,' 'assistant curate,' etc. are offices; 'priest' is an order of ministry. With bishops, however, we use the same word ('bishop') for the office and the order, and that may cause confusion.

If the Rector of Barchester is a woman, we don't say that the office of rector is vacant. She is the true and lawful holder of that office. She is the rector, but we cannot say that she is a priest. There is in fact much precedent for church offices that were originally held by clergy being held by people who are not priests: there have been lay rectors – and, in cathedrals, lay canons and lay vicars.

Similarly, if the Bishop of Barchester is female, she will be the true and lawful holder of the office of diocesan bishop. We cannot say that she is a bishop in the sacramental sense (order), but as 'holder of the office of diocesan bishop' she will be a bishop in the other sense (office).

#### Principle 1: 'Due respect and canonical obedience'

The Church of England expects us to show due respect to those who hold office in it. Office-holders should of course be given due respect. Everyone should be respected, including us!

The Declaration returns to the issue of canonical obedience later on, and so shall we. For the moment it suffices to say that canonical obedience is owed to the holder of the office of diocesan bishop, whether or not that person has been ordained to the order of bishop. A diocesan bishop has spiritual jurisdiction, and is owed canonical obedience, from the point when his election is confirmed. His ordination as a bishop sometimes occurs days, weeks or even months later. In both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church there are Ordinaries who hold jurisdiction equivalent to that of a diocesan bishop, and are owed canonical obedience, but are not bishops.

#### Principle 2: 'A clear decision'

The Church of England has taken a decision, and that decision is clear. We may still hope and pray that in the fullness of time she may realize it to have been wrong. All sorts of things that we thought had been clearly decided in the past are

now questioned and in some cases overturned. No one can be certain that any 'clear decision' will not be questioned or even overturned by future generations. We cannot know what is held in the providence of God. This principle needs to be read in the light of Principle 3.

#### Principle 3: The 'process of reception' continues

The idea of a 'process of reception' was the foundation of the Act of Synod. It now returns as one of the five principles on which the new Declaration is based.

Some have misunderstood this 'process of reception' as a process within the Church of England that would be concluded at some point when the Church of England had come to a common mind on the subject. The existence of the Declaration demonstrates not only that after twenty years this has not occurred, but also that it is not expected to occur in the foreseeable future.

In fact, however, the 'process of reception' was never intended to refer to an internal process within the Church of England. The Act of Synod calls it a process of 'discernment in the wider Church' concerning the Church of England's decision. The Declaration says precisely the same thing in slightly different words: the Church of England's decision 'is set within a broader process of discernment...within the whole Church of God'.

The term 'discernment' refers to what ecclesiologists call 'reception' – the idea that a doctrine enunciated by a council or synod may in the end come to be 'received' by the whole Church – or to be rejected by the whole Church. The Church of England's decision regarding women's ordination is clear, but it cannot be regarded as absolute, because the Church of England is merely part of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church. Orders belong to the whole Church, and in the end it is the whole Church that must decide on changes to them.

The 'process of discernment' or reception continues, and the Declaration acknowledges that.

#### **Principle 4: True Anglicans**

Principle 4 recognizes our position as one of 'theological conviction' (not backward conservatism or misogyny), and one that continues to be within the spectrum of Anglican teaching and tradition. We are tolerated not out of pity and pastoral concern but because ours is a legitimate Anglican theological conviction. It is, of course, the classical Anglican position, and the Declaration says that it is not superseded by the Church of England's more recent decisions.

This principle complies with Resolution III.2 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, which called on the Communion's churches 'to affirm that those who dissent from, as well as those who assent to, the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate are both loyal Anglicans'.

### Principles 4 and 5: Flourishing within the Church of England's life and structures

Because we hold a legitimate Anglican position, 'the Church of England remains committed to enabling [us] to flourish within its life and structures' – not merely to exist, not merely to continue until we die out, but to flourish, to thrive.

The bishops and other authorities in the Church of England

will need to be able to demonstrate (if necessary, to the Independent Reviewer) that what they do in respect of us is directed towards enabling us to flourish.

Principle 5 says that provision will be not only pastoral but also sacramental, that it is not time-limited (it is not terminal pastoral care) and again that it is there to enable us not merely to exist but to flourish (while ensuring that others can flourish too).

#### Principle 5: 'The highest possible degree of communion'

If we accept the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, we cannot say that we are 'not in communion' with women bishops. The Decree on Ecumenism teaches that there are degrees of communion: those 'who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect' (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 3). So there is a communion that flows from our common baptism, albeit an imperfect communion.

Principle 5 calls on us to live in the highest degree of communion that is possible. But in saying this it recognizes that full communion will not be possible. Communion will be

impaired, because the Church of England will no longer have an episcopate that enjoys full mutual recognition and interchangeability (just as it already does not have a priesthood of which that is true).

The Church of England will continue to be composed of Christians who share a common baptism and live in fellowship with each other and therefore in communion – albeit communion that is imperfect.

Within that canonical structure, the bishops, priests and people of The Society will enjoy full and unimpaired communion with each other.

Part of our vocation will be to keep a window of the Church of England open to the great Churches of East and West, and to continue a pattern of ministry that is in visible continuity with the Church through the ages and visibly congruent with what is upheld by the great majority of the Church throughout the world.

In future issues we shall look at how these principles are to be applied in practice, and what the Declaration means for parishes, clergy and people. **ND** 

### A Pastoral Letter from the Council of Bishops

he approval of the Women Bishops legislation brings to an end a decade of debate about what provision should be made for those who are unable, for theological reasons, to receive the ministry of women as priests and bishops.

In the earlier stages of that debate we offered the Church of England a vision of how provision could be made with full ecclesiological integrity not just for us but also for the Church of England as a whole. It is now clear that the reality will be shaped differently, and will fall short of our ideal.

None the less, we believe that we can have confidence in our future as catholics who are called to live out our Christian vocation in the Church of England, maintaining a distinctive witness to the quest for the unity of the Church. The House of Bishops' Declaration embodies a commitment to enabling us to flourish within the Church of England's life and structures. It does so because our theological convictions about ministry and ordination remain within the spectrum of Anglican teaching and tradition. As Resolution III.2 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference stated, 'those who dissent from, as well as those who assent to, the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate are both loyal Anglicans'.

The Declaration assures us that bishops will continue to be consecrated within the Church of England who can provide episcopal ministry that accords with our theological convictions. It makes provision for parishes to gain access to that episcopal ministry by passing a new resolution, supported by a Resolution of Disputes Procedure established by regulations made under Canon, with an Independent

Reviewer. We will be offering advice and resources to parishes to assist with this.

We note that bishops' authority to exercise episcopal functions comes from their ordination as bishops, and that that authority is distinct from the legal authority that they receive by delegation from the diocesan bishop. The debate over the nature of provision for our future life as catholics within the Church of England has helped us to focus on this important point with greater clarity.

The Society will have a crucial role to play in providing a continuing sacramental life in which parishes, clergy and people are in full and uninterrupted communion with the bishop who ministers to them, and with each other. We will ensure that parishes receive support in articulating the theological convictions that the Society exists to embody and, where necessary, in participating in the Resolution of Disputes Procedure.

As your bishops, we want to thank you for your faithfulness during this long period of uncertainty. Now that the debate about provision is over and the House of Bishops' Declaration is in place, we can look forward to a time of greater stability in which, by the grace of almighty God, we can all focus, with renewed energy, on proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord, and on witnessing to him as we serve our local communities and our nation

On behalf of the Council of Bishops

\*\*TONY PONTEFRACT

## God has planted a truth in our hearts

ach evening during the York sessions of the General Synod, the Catholic Group meets after the close of business at 10 pm to say Compline. On Sunday 13 July, the eve of the Synod's debate on Final Approval of the Women Bishops legislation, the Bishop of Richborough gave this meditation on Psalm 37 at the end of Compline, before the singing of the Salve Regina.

Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.

During the Napoleonic Wars someone burst into the office of the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Consalvi, and said: 'Your Eminence, the situation is very serious; Napoleon wishes to destroy the Church.' To which the Cardinal replied, 'Not even we have succeeded in doing that!'

He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday.

A few weeks ago I spent some time with (let's call him John) who was nervous about his selection conference. He had 'failed' once and was really worried about the same happening again. Well, very quickly into our conversation I stopped him:

'John, you are apologizing all the time for being a catholic! 'The Lord has planted in your heart a truth. And it's His truth – not yours. For the Church to flourish He needs you to be able not only to articulate but to live out the Gospel – as a catholic Christian and hopefully one day as a priest.'

For John it was one of those 'kairos' moments, and our whole conversation changed. He began again – now with renewed confidence – to share his faith, his sense of vocation, his experiences and prayer life as a catholic Christian.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;

Do not fret - because of him who prospers in his way,

And the same is true for us on the eve of a day that will change the Church of England for ever. God has planted a truth in our hearts. It is his truth, not ours. And he wants us to hold it for him in love and generosity – with honesty and courage.

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;

Do not fret - it only causes harm.

It is our vocation to be firm and courageous in truth. So our voting 'no' is in fact a real 'yes' for God. It is our vocation to ensure that the gift that is the Anglican way – the gift that somehow holds what can seem contradictory creatively in love – has what it needs to flourish, so that God's will can be discerned and lived out. This is the divine conversation, for the 'mutual flourishing' of his Church.

Psalm 37

Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass.

He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;

do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;

Do not fret - it only causes harm.

And so a blessing, on this the eve of the commemoration of John Keble... May we together live out our vocation in love as servants of the mysteries of God. Amen. **ND** 



#### RECTOR OF THE BENEFICE OF THE WAINFLEET GROUP OF PARISHES

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- provide strong spiritual leadership and help us to make Christ known in our communities
- play a positive involvement within our joint Anglican/Methodist primary school
- to have a sense of humour whether on the beach at Skegness or in the local brewery in Wainfleet!
- have a strong desire to develop their ministry in a rural setting

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A well-appointed Rectory is situated in Wainfleet St Mary.

Closing date for applications: Monday 8 September 12noon Interview date: Monday 22 September

> For further information and the parish profile, please visit: http://dioce.se/vacancies

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### Free to choose?

The campaign to legalize euthanasia is driven by a lack of respect for the sanctity of human life, writes Janet Backman

hen I was at university, I avoided abortion like the plague. Perhaps I should rephrase that: I avoided campaigns about abortion like the plague. It's not that I didn't have strong feelings about it: I held (and continue to hold) to the teaching of the Church that the life of an unborn child is sacred. It was just that the combination of an explosive issue like abortion with the febrile and excitable atmosphere of student politics felt to me like an unhappy one. It seemed that genuine debate was impossible, since the ground was occupied by swivel-eyed loons at the very extremes of each side of the argument. And so I kept clear.

#### The ethics of 'I'

If that seems to be overstating the case, then it is intentionally so, because I have had something of a conversion experience in recent years and months as the campaign for assisted suicide (or 'murder' as we might also like to call it) has gained pace and credibility. All of a sudden, the anger and the outrage and the urgency which I found so off-putting in many of the pro-life campaigners at university seemed a whole lot more

understandable to me. Because the case for legalized euthanasia ('homicide'?') seems to me to be based on precisely the same lack of respect for (even comprehension of) the sanctity of human life as that which drives abortion on demand.

I have seen it argued that assisted suicide is the ultimate expression of freemarket capitalism. That analysis is not far from the truth, though personally I would wish to avoid the implications of class warfare and party political politics that the word 'capitalism' would seem to imply. I would suggest instead that euthanasia is the apogee of the Ethics of 'I,' about which I wrote previously (ND, April). The Ethics of 'I' subordinates any sense of given-ness in doctrine or ethics to my absolute right to have and do whatever I want whenever I want to have or do it. And so just as the right of a woman to choose is deemed to trump

the rights of an unborn child to life in the pro-choice abortion stance, so according to the pro-euthanasia argument, *my* right to end *my* life trumps any other considerations – and so I should be given all the help and support I need to achieve this end.

#### Drawn into sin

The Church accepts that committing or attempting to commit suicide is in itself evidence of an unbalanced mind, and so no longer views suicide as sinful. (Perhaps for similar reasons, the state no longer views suicide as a criminal act.) Yet the same thing cannot be claimed of a conspiracy to end a life. A death that is coolly and calmly calculated, plotted, and planned, must be a rational choice. To participate in it would therefore draw all those involved into sin. More generally, it would hasten the lack of respect for human life and dignity to which society is increasingly succumbing, and which (for example) the hospice movement does so much to counter.

I do accept that there are grey areas here – just as there are (for me) grey areas around extreme and unusual cases

## the Church has a duty to call our legislators to account when they let the Ethics of 'I' triumph

for abortion. Quite where the medical commitment to 'do no harm' ceases to be passive and becomes active will sometimes be less than abundantly clear – and the law has in recent years shown compassion in extreme cases where actions rooted in that uncertainty have become public.

But the law must remain as it is, however much at times those enforcing the law need to show compassion and mercy. Jesus himself always showed compassion and mercy, but was equally clear about the need to go and sin no more. To change the law to allow assisted dying would be to iron out the folds of uncertainty which moral and ethical

action occasionally requires. It would also open the floodgates to further change: who knows where we would be in 20 or 30 years' time? Those who think that that is alarmist should consider the fact that the law governing abortion in this country is still technically that of the Abortion Act, which was considered liberal at the time of its passing, but has long since been de facto superseded by an even more liberal interpretation in practice. Who can really doubt that if euthanasia were legalized today, albeit with strict safeguards and hemmed in by fierce statutory controls, then in 30 years' time doctors would be signing off the required paperwork without even meeting the person concerned - just as is happening now with abortion, despite the demands of the law?

#### **Disturbing**

Were this to happen – and I believe that it certainly would – then the Ethics of 'I' would reach new and even more disturbing heights, by blurring the boundaries about who 'I' refers to. No doubt any legislation passed today would make it clear that I have the right to

choose to die and to be helped in so doing. But once again, who can really doubt that in a few decades' time, journalists would start to uncover cases of 'I' deciding that it really would be best all round if

Aunty Mabel was put out of her misery, and making that decision both for myself and for Aunty Mabel? For surely (in such a world view) *my* right to determine what is best for Mabel *and* for me trumps all other considerations. And of course in this scenario, Mabel is too weak and insignificant for her voice to be heard.

It must not be so. Human life is sacred. The Church has a duty to constantly remind society of that fact, and to call our legislators to account when they let the Ethics of 'I' triumph over that which is given to us by God, and for which we will have to make account to him when our own time comes.

## Fanning the flame

Michael Bailey on a mission initiative that aims to give renewed confidence and hope to parishes

an the Flame is a week of teaching and renewal. St Paul writes to Timothy encouraging him in his ministry. All of us from time to time need to be rekindled and renewed. St Albans, Romford was the first parish to have the relaunched Fan the Flame, which was originally started by Bishop Lindsay Urwin OGS, now the Shrine Administrator of Our Lady of Walsingham.

#### Time of transformation

Bishop Lindsay adapted the Mirfield Missions led by Fr Augustine Hoey CR into a week of teaching and breaking open the Sacraments. Instead of a large team descending on a parish, the teaching weeks are led by a local team from within the congregation and two external missioners who lead the teaching week. Bishop Lindsay found this model to work because the parish owned the whole process. The Mission was led by Fr Norman Taylor SSC and Fr Michael Bailey.

Fan the Flame can be a time of transformation. It can enlarge our vision of God and his Church and give renewed confidence and hope to the people of God in their worship and witness. The home team worked very hard before the missioner arrived and this was led by Derek Greening. The parish asked for this process to happen through a PCC resolution and then two missioners were appointed. The lead is Fr Mark Gilbert ssc or Fr Damian Feeney ssc. The Mission is prayed for by religious communities and all that are connected with Fan the Flame. A Prayer Wall is established to root them in prayer.

#### **Sound teaching**

The week starts on a Saturday where the missioners meet with the home team and they were joined by Bishop John Salt OGS and the week was planned and prayed over. Fr Norman led a mediation before the Blessed Sacrament and this provided us with the right focus for the journey. The two missioners were then commissioned with the home team to lead the parish in sound teaching and spiritual care at the Parish Mass.

The first evening focused on baptism and Fr Michael looked at emptying ourselves of all unnecessary baggage for the week's journey of teaching and renewal. The second night Fr Michael looked at grace and filling ourselves with the love of God and a fabulous painting of Our Lady was provided by a Year 6 student in the local secondary school. Fr Norman looked at the Crucifixion and how it reconciles us with God. The fourth night focused upon how the healing touch is needed to replenish us

Fan the Flame is a way to invite those on the periphery of Church to see the faith in action

for our journey in faith. The final night was the fulfilment of our need for Jesus in our lives through the Eucharist.

#### Spiritual and social encounters

Each day and night was carefully prayed over and planned. The Home Team focused upon hospitality and they provided carefully coordinated meals where the missioners met community. Fr Michael gained 6lbs in just one week! The joy of these encounters was that people that had not encountered each other in a social capacity were given the chance to mingle. At the beginning of the week the missioners were well behaved, but come the end of the week there was no hiding place from the banter that went on! The social encounters were just as important as the spiritual ones.

Each night was led in the beginning by the home team, in which they choose the hymns and organized the testimonies. A testimony is one of the hardest things to do for us Catholics within the Church of England but they managed it very well. The testimonies focused on how people came to faith and how faith changed their lives. This was done by the young and the more mature in years. A personal expression of faith can be very emotional and it was. People whom you have sat next to in church for years opening their hearts, is an incredibly moving experience. Each night happened through the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Continuing process**

Planning per se does not happen as you would do in normal life. The missioners quickly became used to each other's way of working and the dynamic between the missioners is crucial. It is a very special privilege to lead one of these

weeks and therefore it is of the utmost importance that one honours the tradition and the liturgy in which one finds oneself.

One cannot evaluate a week like

this. It is a process, and the process starts the minute the PCC chooses that they want this to happen. Then the weeks that lead up to it again are a process of planning and prayer. Then it happens and the week builds and gets more and more intense. The effects afterwards is up to the parish to decide what to do next. Fan the Flame is a way to invite those that are on the periphery of Church to see the faith in action. It is not necessarily about numbers! It is a process that goes on and on - a journey of deepening our faith and at the same time seeking rest for our weary souls and to be filled with Holy Spirit. ND



## faith of our fathers

#### **Arthur Middleton on Transfiguration**

f in prayer you have been listening and have heard what is happening then a language may well have been communicated, which will have come from the One who lives and speaks in you, spontaneously communicating for all to hear, 'everyone in his own language, the wonderful things God has done'. If this happens, then it will be more than a mere sharing of words and ideas, of dreams and visions, but a sharing of life so that we can say, 'It is good Lord for us to be here'.

To pray is to grow into an ever-increasing sharing of life with God, an ever-increasing sharing of the divine life that the Father lives with his Son in the Holy Spirit. Therefore to see the life of prayer as a re-enactment of the Transfiguration is not to project a fantasy. The reality of what the Transfiguration professes is what we experience in prayer over a long gradual process of being transfigured in Christ as we partake of the divine nature. It is to let the very self, the real and true self, be transformed and transfigured in the milieu of divine life God invites us to share. Prayer and life become integrated as we bring the real and total situation of personal and communal life in which we participate into the larger context of the divine milieu, giving it a new meaning.

#### **Radically new experience**

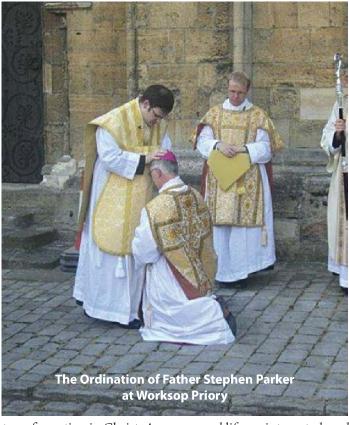
There will always be the temptation to return into the security of life's earlier experience or escape into pseudoreality. But the implications of the Transfiguration mean taking the total, real and actual circumstances of life as they are being lived and experienced, into the glory that will give meaning to it all. The experience will not be in terms of some

other world, but of life as it is renewed and transformed in Christ, made into the knowledge of and communion with God and his Kingdom. It

is an experience radically new because it is 'not of this world,' but whose gift and presence, continuity and fulfilment in this world is the Church. So it is not a private experience in the subjectivism of individual religious experience. What one is concerned to describe here is the unique and *sui generis* experience of the Church, the experience of the Church as new reality, new creation, new life, the Christ-life in which creation and life are renewed and transformed in him.

#### A long gradual process

Each of us in baptism becomes a seed implanted into this new reality that we might grow to full maturity as a child of God. We are endowed with the power of the Trinitarian life, whereby God's interior activity in us and our cooperation with him leads us into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Such growth is a movement in assimilating love which prayer deepens, as it leads us into a long gradual process of



transfiguration in Christ. As prayer and life are integrated, and we begin to respond to the re-integration of our inner being, so we become more sensitive to God's dynamic presence breathing his life into us.

In the words of St Irenaeus, 'the two hands of God', Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are continuously touching the soul.

This loving presence of God penetrates our whole being, creating, redeeming and transforming us into a greater oneness with Christ. 'The Light

which is the Life of men' is experienced as a transfiguring power. In this experience of the fullness of baptism we are moving out from the darkness of self-centredness into the light of God's presence.

#### A glimpse of the Father

the reality of what the Transfiguration

professes is what we experience in prayer

To say then, 'It is good Lord for us to be here,' is to echo what the three friends of Jesus expressed on the mountain of Transfiguration. There is a sense in which we have been climbing a mountain, and the discipline of Christian life and prayer that assists such a climb is never easy. Yet though the climb may at times be arduous, the conviction of that 'loving Presence,' that Our Lord is leading, has always been certain. His concern is that he might lead us into following him, that we might imitate him, put him on in the sense of representing him, to follow him that we might worship him and find in him that he is always the Way, the Truth and the Life.

## With you always

There are different kinds of poverty and they require different solutions, writes Digby Anderson

o you wish to know whether a particular bishop is serious and sincere or up to no good? Here is a little test. It may not help on all matters but it does cover social teaching and that is what so many of them are so keen to talk about. The way people react to poverty tends to tell us more about them than about it. Simply find a statement where they go on about the poor (the ones here not in the third world). Then apply the test to reveal their motivations. Are they saints sincerely and practically trying to help poor people or they merely keen to show off their compassionate credentials? The test is called disaggregation.

#### **Reasons for poverty**

The sincere and practical speaker will immediately disaggregate the poor, making distinctions between different

sorts of poverty. There are as many reasons for being poor as for being rich. Some poor people are temporarily poor, between jobs or during an impermanent illness or after a costly event such as divorce.

Others have been poor all their lives and their parents too. Long-term and transgenerational poverty may give rise to a 'culture of poverty'. Again, some poor people may live in an area which is 'structurally poor' and be unable to move to find work. Others may be able to move but refuse to do so. Skills can become outdated. Time and place can work together. Some areas have seasonal poverty, notably seaside towns. Here not working may be 'normal' during some months of the year. The young poor may have different problems from the elderly. Either can be deserving or not.

#### **Group and individual factors**

Some of the poor are poor as a result of external forces such as low wages or the benefit system. The latter may impoverish because it gives too little or because it gives too much – in comparison with wage rates – and results in welfare dependency. Poverty may be caused not only through low income but incompetent expenditure, failure to budget, ill-judged credit as well as 'addictions' to alcohol or drugs. These are the behavioural causes of poverty. Principal among them is lone parenthood caused by male abandonment, divorce or no-marriage or other arrangement. Such behaviour leaves usually young women on low or no wages.

The difference among the poor is not only between this or that group. It can come down to the difference between individuals. Ordinary priests and parishioners do not only look at the incomes of those who ask for their help. They differentiate between those who will use help to buy bread and those who will buy drugs. State welfare systems are not much good at such differentiation.

#### **Varied definitions**

And ordinary people think of poverty as the lack of money to buy the necessities of life. Politicians, especially Eurocrat politicians, think poverty is relative. He is poor because he has less than someone else, perhaps he has only half the average Euro-income, only one car per family. And even more expansive politicians use poverty to describe a state where lack of income or other factors exclude someone from the mainstream of life whatever that may be. Such ideas are not unworthy of people's consideration but they too must be disaggregated from old-fashioned poverty.

There is another way in which common moral sense disaggregates the poor. The kind soul may distinguish between those who have a greater and lesser call on his particular charity. This 'particularistic ethics' is sneered at by ethicists or

at least those following Kant who think ethics must be universalistic. More fools them. Decent Christian people know they owe more to their own mother than someone else's; Our Lord was especially solicitous

for his Mother. We also know we have a duty to our physical neighbours. The poor of the parish must come before those of Bangladesh, perhaps not instead of but before. Our Lord helped the poor he came across, as did his Good Samaritan.

#### **Practical help**

the way people react to poverty

tends to tell us more about them

than about it

Some of these details may be contentious but the general drift is surely commonsense. There are different sorts of poverty. Each calls for understanding and help. Practical help must fit the different causes of poverty. Therefore the sincere person who would practically help the poor is under a moral obligation to disaggregate them, decide which to help and how. What is the opposite of disaggregation? It is eagerly and undiscriminately to collect every instance of poverty, deliberately ignore the variety of types and causes and herd the lot into a category, the poor. Because the category now includes so many different people and conditions it will be a large number. And that is what this sort of spokesperson for the poor wants, the more poor the better. By showing just how many people are poor and in need of help and by speaking for them all (though probably not for any one of them), he has elevated his own importance. He may also have made the problem of poverty so big that it is beyond private charity and 'demands' government intervention.

So the test reveals show-offs and politicos for what they are, no friends of any of the poor. I leave it to you to apply the test to Bishop this and Cardinal that. But when you've outed the blustering ego, don't forget yourselves to do a spot of disaggregation and find someone in particular to help. **ND** 

### Priesthood, mediation, and reconciliation

Christopher Phillips on the role of the priest as an agent of reconciliation

homas Aquinas wrote of the priest as a mediator between God and Man, in that 'he gives divine things to the people, and again in that he offers the people's prayers to God and in some sense makes reparation to God for the people's sins'. Some would argue that this model of priesthood is unhelpful because it places something, or someone, in the way of a relationship between God and Man. Why should I confess my sins to a priest, for example, when I can do so directly to God and am assured that I will receive his forgiveness? This is of course entirely correct, but as we have seen in countless situations throughout history, the use of mediation facilitates relationships.

As someone who is not a member of the General Synod, I cannot speak from direct experience, but it does seem that the process of facilitated conversations since the collapse of the previous legislation has led to a subsequent increase in the level of trust between those in favour of, and those opposed to, the admission of women to the Episcopate. This example of mediation in action perhaps demonstrates that it is possible to bring people to a point where they may never be able to agree but that a degree of reconciliation is possible that without mediation, would arguably have far weaker foundations.

#### The mediator par excellence

In the case of sacramental confession to a priest, the penitent is often enabled to experience the grace of absolution in a much more powerful, focused way. Confession, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer testified, 'is the renewal of the joy of baptism,' and it is here, just as at the altar, that we see the priest as the mediator *par excellence*: he absolves the penitent on behalf of the Church who has appointed

him to exercise the ministry of reconciliation entrusted to the Apostles by Christ (John 20.21–3).

As a new priest, I feel strongly this sense of calling to be an agent for reconciliation, both in the Church and in the world. The weeks leading up to ordination day have reminded me quite how much all of us, lay and ordained, depend on the prayers and support of others to remain faithful to our calling. In the wake of the vote in Synod we will all need to work to support one another. We must also commit to working together with those with whom we disagree, in order (as Fr Philip North said in his speech to Synod) to 'win the peace. I for one am committed to living the priestly life, confidently and publicly proclaiming Christ's victory over the forces of chaos and division. Who is with

'Everyone who is of truth listens to my voice' (John 18.37, ESV). If life in the Spirit is one of 'listening and response to the Lord', it must be a life that 'is of truth.' This is the same truth that 'sets free' (John 8.32) and Jesus tells us that worshipper whom the Lord is 'seeking' 'worships in spirit and in truth' (John 4.24). One of the chief purposes of spiritual direction is to aid the directee to live truthfully. A righteous life is one lived in the truth: a truth in which the life of the directee is lived with integrity in the truth of the Gospel. Here, of course, Pilate's ironic question resonates: 'What is truth?'

To live in the truth would seem impossible. Sometimes we avoid the truth because it is difficult to bear or share. As soon as we are 'economical with the truth' we begin the creation of a parallel world in which we become the only arbiter of what is fact and what is fiction. It is constructed on the rickety scaffolding of our own fears and fantasies and is destined for disaster. That is one side of the equation.

# Ghostly Counsel Living truthfully

#### Andy Hawes is Warden of Edenham Regional Retreat House

The other side is to determine what the truth of the Gospel is. Although most readers will confess on a Sunday they believe in 'one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church', it would appear that the current fashion to regulate truth by 'context' kills off any concept of 'universal or catholic'. For example, it would appear that the ethics of sexuality are a different truth in some parts of Africa than in the UK. This creates what the liberal mind terms 'second tier truths.'

I have always taken the rubric about Ghostly Counsel from the Book of Common Prayer to be essential guidance, that the minister be a 'minister of God's Word'. It is more a teaching and guidance ministry than person-centred counselling. This chimes in with Ignatius Loyola's notes for spiritual directors that one of their main functions is save the directee 'from error.'

Jesus always spoke the truth. He admitted that he 'did not bring peace but a sword', and that he would divide families and friendships (Matthew 10.44 ff). This sword is the sword of truth. Jesus follows this by predicting that 'those who seek to save their life will lose it' and saying that his disciples must 'take up their cross and follow.' Here he is describing the cost of being one of those he describes as 'of the truth.'

This means the life in the Spirit will always be one of contradiction, conflict, denial. But this way of the cross is none other than the way of life and peace. This call to walk in the way, truth and life is a call to holiness. It is a preparation for that encounter in which 'I shall know as I am fully known.' It is the way to salvation. That is the whole point — isn't it?

## 'Build me a chapel on this spot'

James Leigh describes a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Kevelaer in north-west Germany

ou could be forgiven for never having heard of the Shrine of Our Lady of Kevelaer, in the northwest of Germany close to the Dutch border. But it is to this place of pilgrimage and devotion to the Mother of God that pilgrims from St Mary's Church in Horden, Co. Durham have travelled biannually for the past 20 years, most recently at the beginning of June this year.

#### Origins of the shrine

The story of the shrine is a simple one - around Christmas 1641 a travelling pedlar, by the name of Hendrick Busman, was praying on the spot where the shrine now stands. Rather than seeing a traditional apparition of Our Lady such as those seen at Knock or Fatima, he instead heard a distinctive voice repeating to him 'build me a chapel on this spot.' It was after this divine encounter that work began on the chapel which now stands on the same spot. Upon completion of the shrine a small image of Our Lady Luxembourg, consoler of the afflicted the size of a postcard – was installed into the chapel and there it remains to this

#### A full programme

day.

The Shrine draws very few pilgrims from further afield than Germany and Holland. Few people there speak English and pilgrim groups from England, especially Anglicans, are a rarity! Nevertheless our group was given a warm welcome by the priests and



The Ordination of Fr James Leigh at St Mary's Horden

religious of the shrine. Our accommodation was in the 'priesterhaus' which looked directly onto the chapel of the image and was next to the impressive basilica in which the clergy of our group were invited to sit in quire during the Sunday Mass which was celebrated by the Bishop of Munster, +Felix Genn, on the day which marks the translation of the image to the shrine.

Like our own shrine at Walsingham a full pilgrim programme was provided throughout the week. A particular highlight was the Saturday night candlelit procession around the shrine precincts, at the end of which our group was asked to sing a hymn, in English, to the assembled crowds. With no prior preparation we only had one hymn to hand and thus launched into a rousing

#### a particular highlight was the Saturday night candlelit procession around the shrine precincts

rendition of 'Ye who own the faith of Jesus' – perhaps a little presumptuous at a Roman Catholic shrine but our fellow pilgrims seemed to appreciate it!

#### **Candles**

In addition to the devotional activities, a particular feature of the shrine is the emphasis upon candles – unusually for the Continent real ones. Each day vespers took place in the candle chapel where hundreds of candles were lit around the walls, and outside in the precincts huge pricket stands were alight day and night. At the end of our pilgrimage a candle was blessed and presented to the shrine as an act of thanksgiving for our pilgrimage and as a sign of unity between our own shrine of Walsingham and that of Kevelaer.

During our time in Kevelaer we were also fortunate to make pilgrimages to Cologne cathedral, where we were guided around the relics of the Magi by Fr Richard Gardiner, a priest of the



diocese of Europe. We had the opportunity to visit sites such as the

shrine of Our Lady in 's-Hertogenbosch and the beautiful cathedral in Xanten with its memorial and shrine to martyred priests of the Holocaust.

#### **Beautiful surroundings**

A short flight from Stansted and a quick transfer from Weeze airport means that Kevelaer is in easy reach of many parishes and was certainly worth the trip from Co. Durham. The liturgies were celebrated with great dignity in beautiful surroundings and the sense of devotion to the Mother of God was palpable. In addition we were well looked after by our German hosts, finding ourselves each night sampling the excellent ice cream parlour close to the Shrine! May Our Lady of Kevelaer pray for us and for a deepening of devotion to her, the Mother of Our Lord! ND

## Ordinations by Bishops of The Society

On the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2014 Teresa Monaghan will be ordained to the Permanent Diaconate by the Bishop of Pontefract. She will serve at the Forward in Faith Parish of All Saints' South Kirby.

## Standing at the foot of the Cross

Betty Jarrett reflects on Our Lady's emotions as she stood by the Cross – fear, helplessness, but above all, love

nyone hoping for a theological treatise this afternoon is really in for a disappointment, or perhaps there may be relief that this will be nothing of the sort! After more than twenty years of working as a psychotherapist with those in pain and distress, I have become acutely aware of some of the feelings evoked by being at the foot of the cross. That very phrase 'being at the foot of the cross' trips lightly off the tongue and we almost take it for granted and treat it superficially. I am going to look more deeply at some of the feelings which may have been evoked in Our Lady as she stood watching her son die. Some of those feelings may ring true for us and may be appropriate in some of the situations in which we find ourselves today, whether personally or within the Church.

#### **Horrific scene**

Imagine that we are standing at the foot of Our Lord's cross some two thousand years ago. It is not some beautiful renaissance painting, nor a medieval rood screen. It is the rubbish tip outside Jerusalem. Think for a moment about pictures we see on news broadcasts of the beggars scavenging among the debris in places like Cairo and I do not suppose there will be much difference. The assault on our senses would be horrific. Palestine is a hot country and the stench of rotting rubbish and worse would be truly offensive. There would probably be feral dogs running around scavenging food. The noise would be great. There would be the actual sounds of crucifixion, hammering in the nails and the shouting instructions.

There is a very moving picture in the art gallery in Bergamo in Northern Italy of Our Lord sitting in contemplation on the cross, which is lying on the ground, prior to being raised up. The screams of those being crucified would have been unbearable. There would probably be a

huge crowd. We know from our own country's history that public executions brought out the crowds. What a noise and hubbub. There in the midst of it all stands Our Lady and the other two Marys with the beloved disciple, a still silent reflective group.

#### **Painful experience**

We may well wonder why this group is there. After all it would seem that none of the other disciples turned up. Maybe they had, at that point, scattered

#### even if we do not lock ourselves away physically, we may do emotionally and intellectually

in fear. The three Marys and John would seem to be there simply because they loved Jesus. The love of a mother for her child whatever he or she has done or become is something amazing. The story of the woman caught in the siege in Nairobi a few months ago caught the imagination of the world as she lay on top of her children to protect them from the gunmen. Her safety did not matter. Her children were to be protected. The overwhelming love Our Lady had for her son impelled her to be there. She was helpless in the face of the Jewish crowds. There was nothing she could do but watch

It is such a normal activity to gather at the side of someone suffering. It is particularly painful for a mother at the side of her child. Often we feel helpless as we watch loved ones suffer and matters seem to be out of our hands. To watch a child dying as Our Lady did is perhaps the most painful experience for any parent. Things are in the wrong order – our children bury us. However, Our Lady was not sitting beside a bed watching a child die of a tragic disease. This was a mother watching her son dying painfully, executed as a common criminal.

#### Difficult to understand

So then, Our Lady would have been puzzled. From the moment she said 'Be it unto me according to 'Thy word' she had lived in the knowledge that her son was to be the 'Son of The Most High and would be given the throne of his ancestor David.' What that really means is very difficult to understand, particularly for a young woman in Palestine some two thousand years ago. For all of his life, Jesus had done unexpected things. He had run off in the temple when he was

twelve to talk to those in power. He turned water into wine at a wedding, again with Our Lady watching and telling those in authority to do whatever he tells them.

His healing, teaching and preaching work throughout the region must have left Our Lady wondering just what this was all about. She held on to the promises made to her by the Angel at Jesus' conception. Now it must have seemed like the end of everything. A sword had pierced Our Lady's heart.

#### **Great courage**

Bound up in all these emotions must have been fear. As I said earlier, we are told that there were just the three Marys and John standing at the foot of the cross. None of the others had come to see what was happening as far as we know. Later in the story we are told that the disciples were in a locked room for fear of the Jews. The disciples must have worried that the same fate would befall them as had happened to their Master. Peter's denial on the night of Jesus' arrest is testament to this. It must have taken great courage to remain there.

These emotions of love, bewilderment and fear must seem familiar to anyone standing at the foot of a cross. It is a hard place to be for anyone. We are helpless to change anything. There is part of us which feels that we would take the place of the other if only we could. The strain and agony of those watching and praying is intense,

and often the cry is 'Where is God in all this?'

#### **Our situation**

To some of us within the Church of England at the moment, it must feel that we are watching a loved one suffer. Some parts of the church seem unrecognizable and perhaps we feel that there is nothing that we can do to help. The world around is beset with consumerism, individualism, divisions between rich and poor, haves and have nots. There are wars and rumours of wars. This appears to be a collection of things closely resembling an allegorical rubbish tip. The body of Christ, his Church is pilloried, mocked and derided. Internally the Church is 'By Schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed' and perhaps one could add by anomalies perplexed. We are in that interesting place standing at the foot of the cross and being members of the Body of Christ. So how do we react? There must surely be a temptation to behave like the disciples, to find a convenient upper room, run away and lock oneself in it. Even if we do not lock ourselves away physically, we may do emotionally and intellectually by refusing to join in discussion and debate, and refusing to get our hands dirty in the messy world.

#### **Love for all humanity**

There is, however another way. No matter what fears and doubts Our Lady had she went on standing at the foot of the cross. She went on standing there because of the love she had for her Son. Love is the undergirding of the whole story of Holy Week and Easter. God so loved the world that he gave us his Son. Jesus loved us so much that he was willing to face crucifixion and death. In his dying moments on the cross, his love was shown. As we hear in the very familiar story from St John's Gospel, Our Lord says, 'Woman, here is your Son.' Then he says to the disciple, 'Here is your Mother.

There are many interpretations of this depending which passage, on commentary is being read. It seems to me, though, that Our Lord was giving our care into the hands of his Mother. She becomes a symbol of the Church and John symbolic of all those who are members of that church. Our Lord's care and love for all humanity shines forth in those last conscious moments on the cross. Jesus takes all the evil which this world can throw at him but does not retaliate. His response is love.

St Paul in his letter to the Romans, sums it all up as he says 'Who will separate us from the love of Christ?' It is not a simple namby-pamby kind of love. It is the love which is never afraid to challenge and confront in the face of wrong-doing. It is the challenging of the money lenders or the courage to heal on the Sabbath. It is also the love shown supremely by Our Lady. This is the tough love of a parent watching her child grow and develop in ways over which she has little influence and yet being alongside whatever happens. God loves

#### God will bring about his kingdom of justice, love and peace in his way and not in ours

us totally and unconditionally. Perhaps you and I are being called to love in that way. We sometimes stand in puzzlement when confronted by situations which we do not understand. You and I may wonder where God is in all this. We remember Our Lady standing at the foot of the cross in similar distress and puzzlement but like here we do not stop loving.

#### **Unpredictable**

There is, however, a difference for us. We all know how the story continued. For Our Lady and the disciples the Crucifixion must have seemed like the end of everything. There had been clues and hints and prophesies about what might happen, but no one had imagined



The ordination of Fr Simon Cuff at Christ the Saviour, Ealing

the Resurrection appearances and the coming of the Holy Spirit. You and I now have more hints and clues and live in a world which has been given hope and trust.

For those first disciples, experiencing the risen Christ was often unexpected, on the road to Emmaus, in the Upper Room, or on the lakeside. The disciples were not in control of the situation. Things happened as they happened. We so often think we can predict the end of the story. We want to be in control, but God has other ideas. We see resurrection after the death of a child which leads to the founding of a charity to help others suffering still-birth or neonatal death. It is there in the broken and wounded soul who after years of battling with an eating disorder recovers and becomes a carer and befriender. Seeds of resurrection are sown and grow in the most unpredictable ways.

#### **Encouragement**

We are aware of Resurrection. We grasp at least something of the way in which the triumph of the cross might be understood in the light of Easter Day. This insight gives us the courage to stand with Mary and John at the foot of the cross. It is right sometimes to feel puzzled and scared and worried about what is happening. It is important to recognize the love we have for Our Lord - that is what keeps us there. At the same time we must also be aware that God is in control and will bring about his kingdom of justice, love and peace in his way and not in ours. It would have been so easy for the disciples and Our Lady to become bitter and introverted but they were open to the work of the Holy Spirit which invigorated and renewed them. That same spirit is within all of us. As with Our Lady and the disciples it will give us courage to face whatever the world throws at us. As we stand at the foot of the cross we can recall the words of St Paul,

'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus Our Lord.

What an encouragement that is. ND

