

newdirections

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

Will you join me? Bishop Tony's challenge for the future

Also in this issue:

- Be Fearless – encouragement from Philip North
- National Assembly – full coverage
- Julian Browning on the Incarnation

parish directory

BEXHILL on SEA St Augustine's, Cooden Drive, TN39 3AZ Sunday: Mass at 8am, Parish Mass with Junior Church at 10am. Further details: Father Robert Coates ssc on 01424 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, Holmfild 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, *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, Charnminster 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 (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 Exeter. Sunday: 10am High Mass. Low Mass 10am Tues. Parish Priest: Fr Greg Stanton ssc 07925 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.stchads.dial.pipex.com

BRIDPORT St Swithun *Resolutions ABC*. Sunday: Low Mass 8am; Sung Mass 9.30am, Evening Prayer and Benediction second Sunday 6pm. Weekday Masses: Thur 10am. Enquiries should be made to the Churchwarden. Tel 01308 425375.

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) Parish Office 01 273 822284. **St Paul's** (11am) Parish Office 01 273 822284. (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

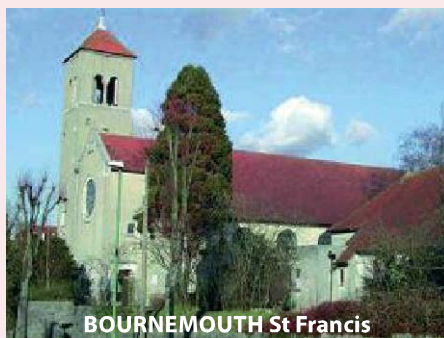
BROMLEY St George, Bickley Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Sung Mass 10.30am. Daily Masses: Tues 9.30am, Wed 10am, Thurs 10am, Fri 9.30am and 6.30pm, Sat 9.30am. Times of Confession and other information from Fr Owen Higgs on 020 8467 3809

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), Friday 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 NE17 7AN *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



BOURNEMOUTH St Francis

COLCHESTER St Barnabas Church, Abbott's Road, Old Heath, Colchester *A Forward in Faith* Parish. *Resolutions ABC*. Sunday: Mass 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 Exeter. 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 01380 813500

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 Richmond. 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: stpetersfolke@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: 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 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, 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 Exeter. 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; 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 E1W St Peter's, London Docks *A Forward in Faith* parish in the Fulham Bishopric. Sunday 8am Mass. 10am Solemn Mass Daily Mass and Offices. Father T E Jones ssc 020 7481 2985 www.stpeterslondon docks.org.uk

LONDON EC3 St Magnus the Martyr, Lower Thames 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. 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 FIF Parish* under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham Sunday: Sung Mass 10am; Thursday Mass 10am - both followed by refreshments. Tube to Wembley Park then 83 Bus to Church Lane Contact: Fr Jason Rendell on 020 8205 7447 or standrews.kingsbury@london.anglican.org

LONDON SE11 4BB St Agnes Kennington Park, St Agnes Place - 8 minutes walk from both Kennington and the Oval tube stations (Northern line) ABC/FiF. Sunday: 10am Solemn Mass. Daily Mass: Mon 10am; Tue 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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Forward in Faith
National Assembly Mass:
The Entrance Procession



Solemn Benediction to conclude the National Assembly of Forward in Faith

Articles are published in *New Directions* because they are thought likely to be of interest to readers. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or those of Forward in Faith.

'Do not be afraid'

Lead Story

Once we have freed ourselves of fear with regard to our ecclesial future, we can be fearless in being God's people in the world, says **Philip North**

My niece is an extraordinary girl. She is only 12, but she seems to be completely devoid of fear, with consequences that can be slightly alarming. This summer, along with her mother and brother, we were cycling through the hills of the Yorkshire Dales. Three of us were rolling along happily, enjoying the view and the fresh air. But not Naomi. Naomi cycles not for aesthetic pleasure, but for thrills. All she is interested in is speed and danger, and of course that makes her mother very nervous indeed.

Risk-taking

We were right at the top of a very steep descent. I told my sister to hold back and promised faithfully to see the children down the hill safely and not go too fast. We set off. We gained speed. Naomi was on top of her handlebars, head down to cut air resistance, pedalling furiously. Suddenly the ground fell away more than ever. I shouted at Naomi to apply her brakes. She took no notice at all. Her front wheel clipped her brother's back wheel, and she flew off into the air and slammed hard into a drystone wall, yards from her bike, a mass of twisted arms and legs.

My first thought was that I'd killed her. But there was movement. Next I thought she'd broken her arm as she seemed unable to grip. What to do? We were in the middle of nowhere, miles from a hospital, no phone signal. And worst of all my sister was about to come over the hill to see that her fears had all been realized. Then suddenly Naomi looked up. 'I can feel my arm again,' she said. Well, at once she hopped back on the bike and pedalled just as fast all the way down. She spent the rest of the week showing off her bruises to anyone who would look and later recalled the fall as the high spot of her whole holiday. She is crazy. But she doesn't half enjoy being alive.

Moment of crisis

All I want to do in this homily is invite you to imitate my niece in that same spirit of fearlessness. I want to invite you to take an enormous risk. As the Catholic movement in the Church of England, at this particular moment in history there is a great deal that we can quite legitimately fear. Within the church we are about to see the promulgation of the canon that allows women to be ordained bishop. Whilst of course the successful passage of this legislation will bring a huge amount of joy to many in the Church, for us it is a moment of crisis. It tears the fabric of communion. It raises complex issues around order and apostolic succession. It seems to defer into the distant future any possibility of realizing our ultimate dream which is communion with the Universal Catholic Church. And whilst



the arrangements for provision appear to offer enough, this is a time of transition with all the uncertainty that brings. Can we make it work? Will promises be kept? Are the Five Principles just spin? Does anyone mean what they have said?

Going into hiding

And if there is plenty to fear within the church, there is even more as we look outside and examine the world into which we are sent as Christ's ambassadors and evangelists. The pace of secularization increases exponentially. There is now a radical disconnection between the church and the institutions of the state, as was witnessed by the recent and frighteningly speedy debate about same-sex marriage. Moreover, a culture which is obsessed by consumption and acquisition and which can see well-being only in economic terms seems profoundly removed from a Gospel of self-sacrificial love. Where on earth do we start in the task of

why on earth could there be possibly be any need for fear when Christ has already won the victory and given us the Kingdom?

winning a nation back for Christ? What does a sacramental evangelism have to offer a culture that has altogether forgotten the language and symbols of faith?

In my youth group in Camden there is a boy who has a very particular way of dealing with fear. He doesn't cry, he doesn't complain. He simply runs away and hides and presumes that when he emerges everything will magically have sorted itself out again. As a strategy it has some scriptural precedent. It is what the disciples did when they fled to the upper room. Hiding is understandable. Our instinct when afraid is to create a safe space for ourselves where we can barricade off the cause of our fear. And that may be our temptation as a movement today. To gather round each other, to ignore the world and its needs in a warm, safe cocoon. To respond to fear by running away.

Words of eternal life

That is sorely tempting. But first, let's listen to the words of Jesus. 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.' Most of this twelfth chapter of Luke is about fear and how as Christians we should master it. Jesus addresses fear of persecution. He deals with fear of insecurity, a fear that leads us to unhealthy addiction to possessions and the material. Then finally he sums it up with that sentence: 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.'

It is a wonderfully simple argument. Why on earth could there be possibly be any need for fear when Christ has already won the victory and given us the Kingdom? That is what Jesus is asking. Fear is over. It is pointless. Our lives are no longer ruled by chaotic chance. We are not randomly generated animals, under the control of nature or fate or greed. Christ is in control of our lives. His rule is already established. So when as Christians we say to each other, 'Don't be afraid,' this is not some groundless reassurance, nor is it based on some ludicrous or irrational optimism. As Christians we literally have nothing to fear because God's promises are even now being fulfilled in us. We already have the words of eternal life. The Son has already gone to prepare a place for us in his many-roomed mansion. The gift of eternal life, the pearl without price, is already ours and there is no power in all this created universe that can take it from us.

Regaining control

So never mind an uncertain ecclesiastical future. Never mind a culture which spurns the things of faith. Never mind whatever vicissitudes or trials or suffering may come our way. The Kingdom is ours. Christ reigns in glory now, and we are his for ever. So we can conquer fear. And when we conquer fear, then we are set free to be the people Christ wants us to be.

Let us be fearless. Let us first be fearless in grabbing hold of the invitation the Church has given us to flourish. For far too long we have felt ourselves to be powerless victims of the decisions of others, slaves to the electronic voting machines of the General Synod. Today, on paper, we have the means to

regain some control. A Bishop's Declaration. A Society. The five principles that assure us that we remain within the spectrum of the teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion. Now we need to inhabit it boldly and fearlessly. Now we need the imagination and the courage to make it work.

Mission

And that matters, because as Fr Houlding constantly reminds us, provision is about mission. Provision is about the space we need to proclaim the saving news of God in Jesus Christ. So once we have freed ourselves of fear with regard to our ecclesial future, we can be fearless in being God's people in the world.

Let us be fearless in proclamation. We need to go on raising

up and finding ways of forming a new generation of clergy whose interest is not in preserving the last vestiges of the past but who have a fresh boldness in evangelization – priests who can experiment, who can take risks, who can bring revival

where there is death and plant new Eucharistic communities. And we need to equip our laypeople so that they have the fearlessness to give reason for the hope that is within them and speak up for their faith in their daily lives.

Renewal

Let us be fearless in service. As Pope Francis has shown so spectacularly, the church only has credibility today when it is seen to stand alongside the poor. People listen to us when we take up the towel and wash the feet of the neglected and the browbeaten and the forgotten. This is our lifeblood as Anglo-Catholics. This is the charism of our movement. We are present in the places and the parishes that the respectable and the ambitious shun. So let us renew ourselves in our love of service and our passion for justice.

And the renewal of our movement won't start from the top. This cannot be about bishops or synods or committees. Renewal can only come from the local. It can only come from parishes hearing their call afresh and realising the dignity of the ministry that is theirs. At a conference I was at recently, Bill Hybels said almost in passing, 'You all know, of course, that the local church is the hope of the world.' Fearless ministry from the local church is not just our only hope. It is the world's only hope. That is how much you matter.

All things are yours, Paul says to the Corinthians as he upbraids them over a division in the Church. Paul, Apollo, Cephas, world, life, death, things present, things to come, all things are yours. For you are Christ's and Christ is God's. There is no need for us to be afraid, little flock as we are, for the Father has given us the Kingdom. All things are ours. So let us be done with fear. And let us hear afresh our call to bring a nation back to the Christ whom we now meet at this altar, the Christ who holds all eternity in his hands and yet who stoops to raise us up to the majesty of heaven. 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.' Amen. **ND**

**let us hear afresh our call to bring a
nation back to the Christ who holds
all eternity in his hands**

Address by the Chairman-Elect

The Bishop of Pontefract as newly-elected Forward in Faith Chairman, invites us to work together to create a plan for the future

Nicola Sturgeon said at the SNP Conference yesterday, 'to become the leader of the party that I joined as a teenager is the biggest privilege of my life, it is an emotional moment, but one that I cherish and one that I relish.' That is very much how I feel as I stand before you this morning.

On Monday, Synod will promulge the Canon to permit women bishops, so our National Assembly today is a pivotal moment for us.

I was ordained in 1982, and as I look back I reflect just how much the Church of England has changed. For the whole of that time the ordination of women has been a part of our lives. In hindsight things could have been done differently or gone better. However, we can look back with some pride at what Forward in Faith has achieved – and what we have prevented. Our struggle began with trying to stop the inevitable, but more recently we have been trying to secure provision that will enable us to continue with integrity in our church. We have won that battle. We defeated the legislation of two years ago that would have destroyed us and have secured provision that is good enough as a basis for our future.

True Anglicans

But when we look back, we should also do so with penitence. Have we always lived up to Our Lord's teaching and example? Have we always loved our enemies and blessed those who persecuted us, turned the other cheek? Have we sometimes allowed the struggle to corrupt us, to make us less christlike?

We now have an invitation to flourish within the life and structures of the Church of England. Are we ready to respond to that invitation and that challenge? If we have sometimes been pushed to the margins – or even preferred to take refuge there – are we now ready to move back and take our rightful place in the centre? We are the true Anglicans. Our future is calling.



Of course there is sorrow at what the Church of England has done. But we need to be known for love, not anger. Projecting an image of anger and bitterness will not attract people to the catholic faith we proclaim.

What we must do

We must continue to tell people why ordaining women to the priesthood and episcopate is wrong – if we don't, that will be forgotten, and our tradition will cease to exist – but we must be known also for what we affirm: catholic faith and order in general, the catholic doctrine of the sacraments – all

the sacraments, not just the sacrament of Orders: Christian matrimony, reconciliation (with the seal of the confessional which is now under threat in Synod), and episcopal confirmation, to name but three.

We must not cease to teach our people, and any who will hear, about The Issue. But we must not decline into a single-issue campaign. The Society exists 'to promote catholic teaching and practice within the Church of England' – all of

**we are the Church of England's
ecumenical conscience, the
guardians of the great tradition**

it – and Forward in Faith must support and resource us all in that.

We must be wise as serpents as well as gentle as doves. We must be vigilant. We must watch out for the wiles of archdeacons. When I was appointed to be an archdeacon in Wakefield in 1997 one parish wrote to Nigel McCulloch asking for alternative archidiaconal oversight. Flying bishops is one thing, but flying archdeacons?

Wider engagement

We must also be open to, and engaged with, the rest of the Church of England. Young people who weren't born when the first women were ordained to the priesthood, and weren't brought up in the catholic tradition, are offering themselves for ordination in that tradition. But how will such people find their way in, if our doors are not open and our bridges to the rest of the Church are not intact? We need to develop some of these young men to be future bishops and archdeacons.

Part of our vocation is to be that part of the Church of England that is still listening to the wider Church beyond these shores, still listening to the Church across the ages, not completely captivated by the preoccupations of the here and now. We are the Church of England's ecumenical conscience, the guardians of the great tradition.

A broad movement

Though we must not be a single-issue campaign, we must also not allow ourselves to be hijacked by the single-issue campaigns of others. We must remain a broad movement, one that is united in defence of catholic faith and order, and the catholic doctrine of the sacraments, not one that is divided by dissension within our ranks.

We must also be tolerant of the diversity of views that exists among us. There are Prayer Book Catholics, Anglo-Papalists and Evangelical Catholics, devotees of the cassock alb and of the amice, eastward facers and westward facers. (And after thirty-one years as a priest and nearly twelve years as a bishop, I still come across many other bizarre practices I have never experienced before.) There are Christian socialists and conservatives. And there are people who take a great variety of views about many great issues of today – social, political and ethical.

Differences

We must be clear about where the red lines are; we must never teach what the Church does not teach; but we must also accept that if we are a lively and diverse body of people we will never agree completely about everything. We must resist any who want to misuse Forward in Faith for their own ends, to hitch us to other campaigns – conservative or progressive – and any whose impact on our movement will tend to divide rather than unite. We must talk more to each other, with the single-minded purpose of ensuring we all sing the same words to the same tune, and try to spot potentially unhelpful interventions from within our respective memberships before

they surface in public. Differences need to be dealt with within the membership and not on the floor of debating chambers or in the press.

Unity among ourselves

We must work harder at unity among ourselves. Not just within Forward in Faith and The Society but across the Catholic Movement. Catholic Societies need to work together, not in silos. The societies have different roles:

- The Society – an ecclesial body
- Forward in Faith – supporting Society with administration and finance, campaigning, advising on resolutions and vacancies
- The Additional Curates Society – vocations, stipends and resources
- The Church Union – teaching and catechesis
- Devotional societies
- Priests' societies
- Groupings of Readers, Religious, and ordinands in training.

we are the Church of England's ecumenical conscience, the guardians of the great tradition

I believe we are stronger because of the inheritance of all these societies that we cherish, but we need them to work together.

If we are not to disappear into oblivion, as a movement that lost its way, missed the opportunity it was given, we must all work *Together* (the name of our newspaper is the clue!) – not in separate empires. Now, today, this year!

Making it a reality

So my challenge to you and me today is to spend the next year working together on a plan for our future. I invite us all to participate in the discussions. Write to me, ring me, share your views and ideas. Volunteer to help. We can't leave this to one or two individuals. If we believe we can now flourish, we need to make it a reality.

Pope Francis said in *Evangelii Gaudium*:

'The principle of reality, of a word already made flesh and constantly striving to take flesh anew, is essential to evangelization. It helps us to see that the Church's history is a history of salvation, to be mindful of those saints who inculturated the Gospel in the life of our peoples and to reap the fruits of the Church's rich bimillennial tradition, without pretending to come up with a system of thought detached from this treasury, as if we wanted to reinvent the Gospel. At the same time, this principle impels us to put the word into practice, to perform works of justice and charity which make that word fruitful. Not to put the word into practice, not to make it reality, is to build on sand, to remain in the realm of pure ideas and to end up in a lifeless and unfruitful self-centeredness.'

The challenge is now to make the future a reality. Will you join me in that challenge – *Together*? **ND**

Here I Am

The effects of new vocations initiatives are encouraging, but this is just the beginning, writes **Darren Smith**

The *Church Times* reported on 7 February that there were 'Not enough boots on the ground.' This headline was generated in response to the Church of England's recent statistics on the number of stipendiary clergy. Without wanting to quote too many facts and figures, the reality is that there are fewer ordinands coming forward; the age profile is worryingly high (42% are over 50); there are more unpaid self-supporting ministers than ever; and the number of full-time stipendiary clergy has fallen to 7,674 with the greatest decrease in among male clergy. The proportion of women has seen a 40% increase in the last decade.

I am sure that you are all only too aware the effects that this is having upon us as a constituency, with the increase in vacant parishes and with the difficulty in recruiting clergy to serve in these parishes. Departures to the Roman Catholic Church, coupled with retirements and fewer ordinations, have left us seriously challenged. As much as we all want to see our constituency flourish and grow, this is simply not going to happen without more priests, be they full-time or self-supporting.

Re-think

The Catholic Societies under the leadership of the ACS has re-branded its vocational work under the new title 'Here I Am', something I hope that you are all already familiar with. But this is not simply a re-launch; this is, dare I say, a re-think about how we present ourselves in a new and confident way in a church that has invited us to flourish and grow.

I may be somewhat biased but I would say that the new material that we have produced, be it our posters, leaflets, You-Tube channel, or our vibrant new Twitter account, shows a constituency that is confident about the future and that is looking outward – a group that is dynamic, relevant and prepared to take risks.

The effects of this initiative have already started to bear fruit, not only in the Vocations Conference this last August that had 34 men attending, but also in a number of other things such as the fact that Ministry Division asked to attend the conference rather than wait for us to invite or cajole them; the numbers of traditionalists at theological colleges and courses are at a level that we haven't seen for many years; and the age profile of our ordinands is among the lowest of any tradition in the CofE.

A top priority

But please brothers and sisters, don't be tempted to relax back in your pews and pat yourselves on your back saying haven't we done well, for this is just the beginning. And if we are to take our place around the Justin Welby table, we need to press on together with this important task of resourcing our church's ministry for the future. Believe me, no matter how

good our literature is or how engaging our videos on YouTube are, without us all claiming ownership of the initiative, then we are ultimately going to fail.

Recently I was asked to address a Forward in Faith Diocesan AGM and I simply asked the question how many people had heard a sermon, or seen an article in a parish magazine, or attended a prayer event in the last 12 months that was simply about vocation, and sadly no one held their hand up. Perhaps many of us need to hold our heads in shame, for the message of vocations to the priesthood and the religious life should come towards the top of our new priorities in a church committing itself to mission and evangelism.

Four simple words

So I want to end by asking you all to remember four simple words and put these into practice over the next 12 months. These words are:

· Challenge · Look · Ask · Pray

The first letter of each spells the word CLAP.

Challenge – never be afraid to challenge anybody with a thought of being called to priesthood or the religious life. This is what somebody may desperately want to hear, almost as a validation of their call.

Look – the person next to you, in front of you or behind you many indeed be the very one that God is calling to some form of ministry within the church. It is not so ridiculous that someone from your own congregation may fit in this category and it is only by looking that you will then be able to encourage and support them.

Ask – ask yourself: am I being called? Please don't hide behind excuses. You might not be too old, you could well be clever enough, you are no less holy than anybody else. God calls all sorts of strange people to ministry; you only have to look at the clergy here today to see how true that is. And in spite of what some of the priests may say, none of us are perfect.

Pray – vocations begin with God and not our need. Ministry is not a job vacancy but a calling and a way of life. Constantly ask the Lord to send more labourers for the harvest. Encourage prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, arrange vigils and days of prayer, put vocations on your parish and personal prayer list and please use the ACS prayer, Almighty God Give us Priests.

So, my dear friends, let me leave you considering this four-letter word CLAP: Challenge, Look, Ask and Pray. We may not all be charismatic Christians but I hope we will all CLAP when I say no priest, no future.

Twitter: @heriamvocations
www.here-i-am.org.uk



Gratitude and confidence

Edward Martin pays tribute to the work of the Catholic Group in General Synod

I beg to move, on behalf of the Council of Forward in Faith:

'That this Assembly thank the Catholic Group in General Synod, and especially those of its members who served in the Facilitated Conversations and on the Steering Committee, for their faithful witness, and for securing provision that enables us to go forward with confidence.'

A huge debt

It is true to say that 'a lot can happen in a year' – but that has rarely been true of the Church of England! But when you think back to October 2013, when the legislation had yet to be published, you can appreciate that an awful lot has happened since then.

In many ways it has been a frustrating time. We have been asked to be patient, to temper our politics a little, to pray, to hope and tentatively to trust in a new process that has sought to resolve the issue of women in the episcopate by consensus and co-operation rather than by 'knife-edge votes' in the General Synod. It has not been easy for us.

More than ever, we have had to sit tight and put our future within the Church of England into the hands of those who represent us. We owe a huge debt to the members of the Catholic Group on Synod who, together with our bishops and other key individuals from our constituency, have engaged in this process and have secured for us both provision that we can at least work with and recognition that our position is both authentic and legitimate – not only within the broad spectrum of Anglicanism, but also within the teachings and practice of the Church Universal.

Hope of flourishing

Now, that is not to say that we have got everything that we wanted – far from it. But while the legislation agreed by the General Synod falls short of our ideal, it is much more likely than the previous failed legislation to give us the hope of flourishing as Catholic

Christians in the Church of England.

The House of Bishops' Declaration and the Five Guiding Principles set the issue of the ordination of women within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God. They ensure that pastoral and sacramental provision will be made for us without a time limit and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion.

Furthermore, the Disputes Resolution Procedure and the Independent Reviewer, together with the requirement of a two-thirds majority in Synod to change the Declaration, offers us more security than we had under the previous Act of Synod.

Courageous witness

The motion before you expresses gratitude to the Catholic Group for their actions on our behalf and for their courageous witness in voting against the main legislation because it embodied the principle of ordaining women as bishops.

And should anyone think that the

we have now been given the possibility of flourishing – what will we make of this opportunity?

strength of our position has somehow been diluted in this new era of co-operation, they would be wise to note that 23% of the House of Laity still voted against at Final Approval – a clear indication of the support for our position and the need for lasting provision.

With that in mind, I am sure that we would all wish to register our thanks to Fr Simon Killwick for his careful leadership as Chairman of the Catholic Group and his participation in the Facilitated Conversations, together with Fr Paul Benfield and Dr Lindsay Newcombe. And we should also recognize the contribution of the Bishop of Chichester who, along with Fr

Benfield, served on the Steering Committee that drafted the legislation.

Building on achievements

A lot can still happen in a year! The closing of this particular chapter in the life of our constituency (and in the work of Forward in Faith) begs the question, where will be we twelve months from now? The events of the last year bring into sharp focus Fr Sam Philpott's call to us to get 'off the battlefield and onto the mission field.'

We have the Sacraments, we have the Scriptures, we have the teachings and the traditions of the Church. We have everything we need! We have now been given the possibility of flourishing. What will we make of this opportunity? Let us resolve to build on the achievements of this last year and use them as a platform from which we can continue to bear witness to Catholic truth in the parishes and communities where God has placed us.

With gratitude and confidence, on behalf of the Council of Forward in Faith, I move the motion:

'That this Assembly thank the Catholic Group in General Synod, and especially those of its members who served in the Facilitated Conversations and on the Steering Committee, for their faithful witness, and for securing provision that enables us to go forward with confidence.'

*

Mrs Anneliese Barrell, Vice-Chairman of the Catholic Group, thanked the Council of Forward in Faith for its support to the Catholic Group; the past and present Directors, Stephen Parkinson and Colin Podmore, for their advice; and the members of Forward in Faith and the other Catholic Societies for their trust and their prayers. She also paid tribute to the quality of the leadership shown by the Chairman of the Catholic Group, Fr Simon Killwick.

The motion was passed *nem. con.*

Four eventful years

As he steps down from the role, the [Bishop of Fulham](#) reflects on his time as Chairman of Forward in Faith

The Clerical Vice-Chairman of Forward in Faith, Fr Ross Northing, expressed the thanks of the Assembly to the outgoing Chairman, Bishop Jonathan Baker, for his contribution to the work of Forward in Faith. Bishop Jonathan then addressed the Assembly.

Fr Ross, first as National Secretary, and latterly as clerical Vice-Chairman, you have been an absolutely loyal and resolute right-hand man, full of wisdom, and with a sure touch in communicating the mood and insights of the grass roots. I am delighted, Father, that you have been re-elected unopposed to your present office in Forward in Faith. I am equally delighted that Dr Lindsay Newcombe continues as Lay Vice-Chairman. Lindsay, you too have been unfailingly supportive. You never seek to dominate a meeting, but your counsel and contributions are always hugely valuable, carefully thought-through and born of a deep faith and commitment to the Gospel.

With priests and lay people like this to lead, Forward in Faith is very blessed. I want to put on record my thanks to both Fr Ross and Lindsay not only for professional support, but also for personal friendship. I would like, with them, to couple the names of all members of the Executive Committee, past and present. Will you please give them a round of applause?

Challenging times

When I was elected as Chairman of Forward in Faith, it was not the easiest time to take on leadership of this organization: an organization of which I have been a member, member of Council and national officer for many years. Four years ago, much of an entire generation of Forward in Faith's leadership was on its way to new ecclesial pastures, among them the long-serving, colourful and media-friendly former Chairman, Bishop John Broadhurst, who by personality and conviction had towered over the traditionalist landscape for so long. I knew I could not be another John

Broadhurst; who could be? But new challenges were on the horizon in any case, and a huge amount of work needed to be done. There were challenges of structures, membership and money. I knew that it would not be long before Stephen Parkinson would retire as Director, leaving a huge gap which would have to be filled by someone really capable and committed if Forward in Faith were to have any future at all. Above all, the political landscape at that time looked bleak.

Tireless work

Well, it will be for others to judge the achievements of the last four years, but I would hope that anyone making those judgements will reflect on this. We have appointed an outstanding new Director, who continues to bring a wealth of skills and experience to the post, whose command of detail is second to none, and who, crucially, is able to work across the Movement, with bishops, clergy and lay people, not only in explaining and

everywhere in the new arrangements we read of a commitment to our flourishing

interpreting the new situation, but also in keeping us focused on the big picture and a positive agenda. We have begun to put our finances in order, though there is a very long way to go. We have begun to attract major new donors, surely a sign that an organization is taken seriously and that people 'out there' wish for its success – as well as being a spur to us to keep focused on what really matters and not to become distracted.

We are beginning to refresh our membership. We have streamlined our structures and are in the process of making our constitution fit for purpose. In the midst of all this, we have continued to publish one of the very best ecclesiastical journals from any stable in the Church of England, one which we know is read and respected across the board. We have done everything possible to foster an ethos of mission,

evangelization and the nurture of vocations, so that Christ may be made better known among the people of England.

Above all, we have worked tirelessly, and successfully, for the defeat of bad legislation; and we have then played our part in bringing to birth the present arrangements which are so much better, and which offer us so many possibilities for the future – a future which, under God, is in our hands.

A huge achievement

What a lot of flak we received when the old Measure was defeated in the General Synod of November 2012. But then, lo and behold, all sorts of people started piling in to say that, actually, they agreed that that Measure was no good, and that they were pleased that it had gone down. Funnily enough, they had not said so at the time. What it is to be prophetic! And so to the arrangements as they now stand, on the verge of coming into force. Had you told me that the doctrine of Reception was going to be enshrined in a House of Bishops' Declaration, attached to a Canon which could only be altered by a two-thirds majority in each House of the General Synod, I would not have believed you. Everywhere in the new arrangements we read of a commitment to our flourishing, as those whose convictions are fully within the spectrum of Anglican teaching and tradition. This is a huge achievement – and we should all be very proud of ourselves.

May I thank you, as I come to a conclusion, for your good wishes? Please pray for me, as I do for you. I ask you to give all the support in the world to Bishop Tony and his team, old and new, and especially of course to Colin and David, his new assistant in the office, in their vital work. It has been a privilege, and I look for all future success.

I pray, dear friends, above all that we may love one another; for without love, all our doings are nothing worth. Thank you so much. **ND**

Urban ministry

Simon Morris explains the particular challenges faced by churches in the city

I want to tell you what happened one day as I was putting on a chasuble to say Mass. There was a loud crash. I decided to go and investigate and discovered that a labourer who had been up a ladder had fallen onto the sedilia from a height. Thankfully and amazingly he turned out to be all right. My training incumbent was at a meeting so, as a rather terrified curate, I telephoned for the ambulance. After a couple of hours of activity I could continue to say the Mass.

Hectic environment

So often the city can be a place of chaos. Contrast the heavenly city, which is without sea, that symbol of disorder. Our churches that are placed in hectic environments are called to be oases of calm in these settings and so we do well to ensure that our main purpose, prayer and devotion to God, is clear in our places of worship and that there is not too much else to distract those who come. I once attended an Anglican Church, and as I walked through the door the first thing the welcomer said to me was, 'Good morning.' The second was, 'Do you pay income tax?'

The city can also be a place where change happens daily. The systems of social housing can mean members of our communities have to move often and quite far away. In Tottenham it is not unusual for members of the congregation to spend six months in London and six months back home, wherever that may be. People move on, and this is shown in a significant turnover in our electoral rolls. It means parish churches cannot be places where people need to have been worshipping somewhere for ten years before they are seen as eligible for PCC membership. Equally, it is never a good idea to bombard new people with pleas to sign up for rotas that desperately need filling. A tricky balance.

Long-term planning

High transient rates can also lead to frustration when you invest in someone, giving them experience and training to

people move on, and this is shown in a significant turnover in our electoral rolls

fill a role of leadership, and then you get told they are moving on. This must not deter us from encouraging people to hear God's call to serve. And nor must it deter us from long-term planning. During recent years, Anglo-Catholics have all too often been plagued with doubt over the future: 'Will I still be welcomed in the Church of England in five years' time?' This will have handicapped us in our ability to make long-term plans and to ensure our parishes have Mission Action Plans.

It is crucial that more than one individual in each parish knows the answer to the question of where it hopes to be in three years' time. And that is not just the incumbent's job, it should be part of everyone's hope. I once joked in a sermon that I could be vicar of St Mary's for forty-three years. No one laughed. The congregation smiled and nodded. That is not what I mean by long-term planning.

Permanent presence

It is hugely advantageous that the Church makes the commitment to be present in communities permanently. In

often our buildings have been seen as millstones round our necks, but they can be mission-enabling gems

negotiating a lease for the new church in Tottenham Hale, the developers were delighted that the Diocese of London wanted to speak in terms of centuries rather than decades. This could also be



said in our attempts to broker partnerships with other organizations. So often our buildings have been seen as millstones round our necks, but actually they can be mission-enabling gems. Projects to have nurseries, housing, post offices and even gyms in church complexes can bring fresh money to our parishes. This is not about selling off the family silver, but ensuring we have a future. Developers are often greatly impressed when they see the extent of our work with the community, the young and the vulnerable and this will lead them to want to do business with us.

Crucial links

I often recall those great words from the Common Worship Ordinal: 'You cannot bear the weight of this calling in your own strength, but only by the grace and power of God. Pray therefore that your heart may daily be enlarged.' We need partnerships to ensure we can live out the vocation God has given us. One thing I know I need to do soon is go and introduce myself to a new headteacher at a community primary school in the parish.

These links are crucial. It also ensures we continue to be a servant church if we go to other groups in our contexts and say to them, 'How can we help you? What do you need?' Roman Catholics often seem better at these sorts of partnerships than we are and perhaps this is owing to the confidence many Catholic institutions have. In the new dispensation that we live with in the Church of England, where we are encouraged to flourish, hopefully we can have that same confidence. **ND**

faith of our fathers

Arthur Middleton on the divine institution of bishops

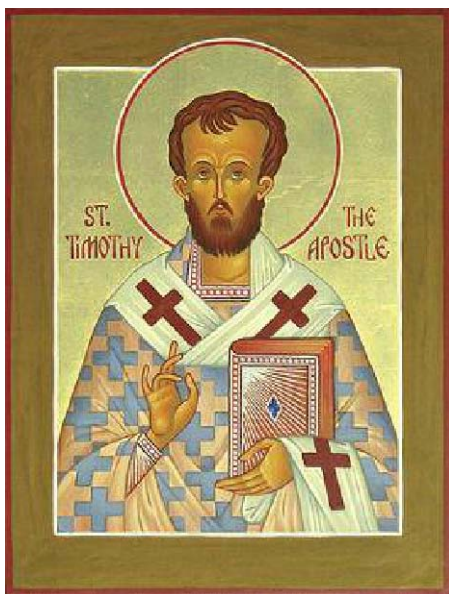
Apostles or apostolic delegates in the New Testament and their successors in the bishops in the subsequent history of the Church is one way of exercising the divine authority committed to the Church. Examples of the ordinary rule of an Apostle are found in the First Epistle to the Corinthians and the Pastoral Epistles. In 1 Corinthians, St Paul gives authoritative decisions and makes authoritative statements on different matters. About a serious offence against the moral law he writes, 'I have already pronounced judgment in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing' (1 Cor. 5.3).

Throughout his Epistles, not only does he give pastoral instruction to the churches but also he admonishes them with supreme authority, censuring errors in faith and practice, as one set over them in the Lord. On important doctrinal issues his words are: 'I would remind you ... I preached to you ... I delivered to you' (1 Cor. 15.1–3). In the Pastoral Epistles Paul instructs Timothy and Titus about the choice of clergy and deaconesses and widows, and the methods in which they are to administer discipline (1 Tim. 3.1, 1–13; 5.9–11, 19; Tit. 1.5–9; 3.10, 11).

Apostolic delegates

The Pastoral Epistles demonstrate the governing authority of an Apostolic delegate, where it is clearly shown that Timothy and Titus were rulers of the Church, becoming successors in the episcopal office, Timothy as bishop of Ephesus and Titus of Crete. They are responsible for regulating the teaching of doctrine, approving candidates for the ministry, and the maintaining of discipline in general. Part of Timothy's duty is 'that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies' (1 Tim. 1.3–4). He was responsible for the selection of those to be appointed to

sacred offices and it was his task to reprove sinners, and to receive and hear accusations (1 Tim. 3.1–13; 5.1–22). Similarly it was the duty of Titus to 'amend what was defective and appoint elders (presbyters) in every town'; to select those who were to be appointed; 'to exhort and reprove with all authority' (Tit. 2.15), and, when necessary, to exclude from communion (Tit. 3.10, 11).



Appointment of bishops

During the lifetime of the Apostles, St Ignatius was made bishop of Antioch and St Polycarp of Smyrna. The meaning of *episcopus* cannot here be misunderstood, as St Ignatius speaks of the three orders of bishop, presbyter, and deacon. St Polycarp was ordained bishop of Smyrna, as we are told in the Encyclical Epistle on his martyrdom, and in the *Apostolical Constitutions* we read of many others whom the Apostles appointed bishops of churches.

Thus bishops succeeded the apostles in the government of the Church, and being their successors, possessed the same power of jurisdiction, as indispensable to their office, and for extending mission to inferior ministers.

St Irenaeus speaks of 'bishops to whom the Apostles delivered the churches'; and St Cyprian, 'that the Lord

chose apostles, that is bishops'; and again, 'for this, very especially, we do and ought to labour that we strive to hold fast as much as we can the unity appointed by the Lord, and delivered through the apostles to us their successors'; and St Jerome, 'with us, bishops occupy the place of Apostles,' and 'bishops are successors of the Apostles.'

The episcopal order being of divine institution and unchangeable, the Fathers unanimously teach that it is essential to the constitution of the Christian Church. St Ignatius says, 'My soul be for theirs who obey bishop, presbyters, deacons; ... without these there is no Church.' 'The mark of the body of Christ,' says St Irenaeus, 'is according to the succession of bishops to whom the apostles delivered the Church which is in every place;' and St Cyprian tells us that 'the Church is in the bishop and the bishop is in the Church, and that he who is not with the bishop is not in the Church.' St Augustine and St Optatus appeal to the succession of bishops in the Roman Church as proving that the Donatists were separated from the communion of the Catholic Church.

Successors of the Apostles

From the beginning of the second century onwards, there is very clear and abundant testimony as to a rule exercised by the bishops of the Church. It corresponds to what we see in Timothy, Titus and Paul. Everywhere the bishop is regarded as holding an authority, which is his because of divine appointment; like the Apostles who received their offices by the direct gift of Christ, so the bishop held his episcopate by means of his spiritual descent from the Apostles, and through them, from Our Lord himself. Joseph Bingham, the seventeenth-century Anglican divine, claims that the most ancient title given to a bishop is that of apostle, which, in a large and secondary sense, is thought by many to have been the original name for bishops, before the name bishop was appropriated to their order. **ND**

devotional

Stewards of mysteries and the master touch

Arthur Middleton

Who would be a Priest? It was the title of a pamphlet published in 1953 by SPCK. It opens with a priest in hospital recovering from an operation. Sunday morning had never been an opportunity for lying in bed, which was only a place to sleep in till the alarm dragged you out on your knees for another day's work. He couldn't remember the last time he missed a Sunday at the altar. As he dozed and awoke with the ward buzzing around him, a phrase kept coming into his mind, 'loving people into holiness, loving people into holiness.'

Vocation

The Hospital Chaplain was relieved to find another priest to whom he could talk of his difficulties. This young harassed Chaplain told the old story of a difficult matron, agnostic doctors, lack of response from nurses and patients. He told the Chaplain, 'All you have to do, my dear

brother, is to try loving them into holiness.' He wondered if it would help the Chaplain in the same way that it had certainly helped him as an *ideal*. Is it too far removed from the week-day and Sunday chores of the parish priest he thought? Then he remembered that it is just what our Lord did to Peter and Mary Magdalene and the rest. Also, he does it to us and he wants us priests to do it to our flock.

Scouting had brought Bernard into contact with Skip Marten, a chronic asthmatic, an untiring priest of young people who 'so lived that he magnetized,' without fussiness. He had no aspirations for a living as he was best when second in command. His example, rather than any word from Skip, had inspired Bernard's vocation.

Preaching Jesus

Skip Marten is an example of those who preached Jesus Christ in a way that

had not been preached for many years. The strength of Catholic Anglicanism has been the recovery of the parish as central to the Church's mission, where there emerged a Christian sanctity not seen in England for decades, even centuries. Today it has not been seen anywhere else.

It was a missionary sanctity, an evangelistic holiness that was rooted in the deep convictions of great parish priests living austere and disciplined lives and in consequence with the evangelists' love for human souls. Hidden daily with 'Christ in God' and praying without ceasing, they lived in the milieu of heaven. In their company one became conscious that the unseen world is the real world, and Christianity is caught before being taught. From such priests it was caught and taught as well. 'Loving people into holiness' is the most effective preaching of all, because unmistakably it demonstrates the self-sacrificing love of Christ in which such priests live. **ND**

Readers will now be writing or receiving Christmas cards. This is a task that can be time-consuming and sometimes expensive but it is one that I particularly look forward to. I do not find it a burden at all; rather I find it an opportunity for a spiritual exercise, or to be more exact, a series of exercises. I share my experience because it is something that I have always found helps me enormously in my spiritual preparation for Christmas and some readers may find that it helps them.

First, I always make my own cards. This usually means writing a poem on paper and copying it on to cards. This in itself creates an opportunity to reflect on the Christmas Gospel and draw some fresh insights from it; to read around a little and spend some time early in Advent reacquainting myself with the Gospel narratives.

Secondly, I write the addresses on the envelopes. This is my first opportunity to pray for the recipients – some of whom I have not seen for years. In a profound way the Christmas cards are Christ-centred and writing the addresses and reflecting on my relationship with the addresses invites me to put Christ at the centre of our

Ghostly Counsel

Christmas Cards

Andy Hawes is Warden of Edenhall Regional Retreat House

connection – however it may have come about.

Thirdly, I write the cards and when I can I write a short message. In the parishes I serve, it is usually a note of thanks for their help, or might pledge a specific prayer of intercession of them. This is not an overly pious exercise but has a quiet domestic setting, usually accompanied by a mug of tea at the kitchen table! As soon it becomes 'hard work', I stop and go back to it later. I do prefer it to be a labour of love rather than an act of duty. By the time this article is published I will have been pecking away at my list for a few weeks.

My pleasure in sending them is matched the joy of receiving them. I do realize that some cards that are received are the outcome of some

office's Christmas routine, and I also recognize that some arrive out of mixture of motives, but that does not account for the majority. The majority are from people who have an affection or regard for me and my wife. They are tokens of love and thankfulness and sometimes a reconnection with precious times past. We have a nightly Advent ritual of reading cards received during the day after supper. This often provokes conversation and discussion that in turn can inform our prayer and actions, helping us order some priorities for the next few months, or the next year.

Last but by no means least some of the cards received are beautiful. We receive several each year that are works of art in their own right, often bringing to us light and insight into the Nativity of our Lord. In addition there are the wonderful reproductions of paintings, some of them unknown to us, which open up new perspectives on the Christmas Gospel. We have a collection of favourites from over the years that are part of our Christmas decorations. For me Christmas cards are not 'humbug' or a waste of time or money but one of the most rewarding aspects of Advent and Christmas.

The importance of words

Nicholas Turner on some of the weirder elements of the Marriage Act regulations coming into force on 10 December

It is one of the scandals of post-1997 parliamentary democracy that bills can be debated, passed and enacted before they have been fully worked out. This offers the bizarre situation, repeated many times over in a variety of different areas of our common life, that a law can be on the statute book before anyone knows exactly what it means or how it applies. Weird but true.

Equal civil marriage

The new Marriage Act, which came into force on the eve of Mothering Sunday, introduced the new institution of Equal Civil Marriage, available to any two people, not closely related to each other, nor already married. Gender is irrelevant. This in turn means that sexual intercourse no longer has any relevance or connection with civil marriage. Any two single persons, not related, can enter a contract of civil marriage; or more simply, be married.

This new form of marriage becomes what one might call 'a civil partnership'. But as we know, there are already civil partnerships (introduced by means of a mammoth piece of legislation, of 264 clauses and 30 schedules, less than a decade ago) available only to same-sex couples. It has therefore been decided that they too should be allowed to marry, without having first to dissolve their civil partnership.

Draft instrument

A draft instrument has now been issued by the Secretary of State. From 10 December 2014, couples in a civil partnership can convert their relationship into a civil marriage. An earlier draft, in July, was shown to gay activists ('there has been engagement with relevant stakeholders', as the regulations coyly put it) who were splenetic in their disapproval. Not surprisingly. The proposals were mean

and miserable. There was the Prime Minister gushing about gay rights, and there was his government peddling a nasty and heartless procedure. This too was weird, as the junior minister given the task is himself in a civil partnership.

as with the original civil partnership, it is a signature alone that establishes the contract

A new draft instrument has now been issued (though as the government's own website is forced to admit, the original draft must be shown in full, as the revision has not yet been enacted). We can only hope, at this late stage, that no further changes will be made.

Conversion declaration

Assuming the Secretary of State gets her act together (literally?) couples currently in a civil partnership will be able to convert it to a marriage, receive a marriage certificate, and be allowed a ceremony following the conversion. Why, you ask, should we be in the slightest bit interested?

The conversion takes place when 'at the invitation of the superintendent registrar, and in the presence of the superintendent registrar and of each other, each of them has signed the conversion declaration' [3.1.a]. The declaration is as follows: 'I solemnly and

will thereby become my lawful wife [or husband]' [3.2.b].

As with the original civil partnership, it is a signature alone that establishes the contract. As if to underline this, 'As well as signing the conversion declaration as mentioned in paragraph (1)(a), the parties may, if they wish, say the words of the declaration in paragraph (2)(b) to each other in the presence of the superintendent registrar' [3.3]. The spoken word may be used, but only *as well as* the signature. It is only an optional extra.

No vow required

You can be married (in the terms of the Marriage Act) without saying any words at all. True, if you are an opposite sex couple, you will still have to declare by word your consent one to another; for as yet no further regulation has been issued to resolve the several anatomical anomalies between opposite-sex and same-sex couples. They undoubtedly will be, as with such things as adultery and consummation which are still, in law, gender specific. They will be, because it is the explicit purpose of the Act, and all the regulations that follow from it, that there should be no difference in substance between opposite-sex and same-sex marriages. The word 'equal' in the new institution of civil marriage is entirely deliberate: it was the stated purpose of the Act.

What the new conversion regulations show us, therefore (we've got there in the end), is that the spoken word is not of the substance of the civil contract. No vow is required. By contrast, Holy Matrimony is established by the couple's exchange of vows. Equal civil marriage is – as the new regulations have now clearly shown – explicitly not the same thing as Holy Matrimony. **ND**

any two single persons, not related, can enter a contract of civil marriage; or more simply, be married

sincerely declare that we are in a civil partnership with each other and I know of no legal reason why we may not convert our civil partnership into a marriage. I understand that on signing this document we will be converting our civil partnership into a marriage and you

Change and decay in the USA

Colin Podmore examines the latest statistics published by The Episcopal Church (USA)

These days, the publication of annual statistics rarely gives much joy to any mainstream church. The 16% fall in average Sunday attendance in our own church between 2003 and 2013 must make us reticent in commenting on the statistics of others. Our decline may be slower than some, but it is still decline, and relatively rapid decline at that.

But when decline is so great that significant structural change seems likely to result, it deserves wider attention. Judging by its recently-published 2013 statistics, that seems to be the position in The Episcopal Church (TEC).

A new Episcopal Communion?

Following its marginalization in the Anglican Communion, The Episcopal Church now stresses its identity as an international church (its own international communion?), consisting of '109 dioceses and three regional areas in 17 nations'. When the House of Deputies meets, the flags of these seventeen nations (six of them European) are proudly and prominently displayed.

This is slightly misleading, in that on an average Sunday last year 95% of TEC worshippers were in the United States and only 5% in the other 16 nations put together. As the Diocese in Europe has congregations in 42 countries, the Church of England could, with equal justice, present itself as consisting of '42 dioceses in 43 nations' – a true statement that would tend to create a false impression. This article will concentrate on TEC's 'domestic dioceses'.

Differential decline

In the ten years from 2003 to 2013 TEC's average Sunday attendance (ASA) in the USA fell by just under one quarter (24.2%) overall, but this average conceals significant regional variation. The Episcopal Church consists of nine units called 'provinces' (confusingly, since they have no metropolitan and are not even necessarily presided over by a bishop). In Province 4 (south of Virginia

and east of Texas – the heart of the conservative South) the average decline was 'only' 17.6%. However, the decline in the domestic dioceses of the other seven US-based provinces ranged from 23.7% (Province 2: New York and New Jersey) to 28% (Province 5: Missouri and the eastern Mid-West, including the former Anglo-Catholic heartland of Illinois and Wisconsin). The average decline outside the South-East was 26.3%.

At the level of dioceses, the disparity is even greater. Dioceses established by

liberal dioceses are declining more swiftly than more conservative dioceses

TEC's leadership for those who remained Episcopalians when three dioceses seceded show declines in attendance of over 70% compared with the 2003 figures: Fort Worth (79.9%), San Joaquin (79.3%), Pittsburgh (70.9%). Two mid-western dioceses have lost over 40% of their attendance in ten years: Springfield (42.5%) and Northern Michigan (40.8%), while another nine have seen their attendance shrink by more than one-third. On the other hand, Utah and ten Southern dioceses managed to keep their decline below one-sixth, while Nevada even saw increased attendance, growth between 2009 and 2012 resulting in a net gain of 5.2%.

Reasons

Doubtless there are many reasons both for the dramatic overall decline in attendance and for the variations between the dioceses.

The withdrawal of five dioceses, with the majority of their worshippers, is certainly one factor. The departure of many congregations from other dioceses is another. (Where congregations left but the diocese remained, in most cases they left their property behind, or will lose it, because TEC's Canons, though silent on the question of diocesan

secession, stipulate that parochial property is held in trust for the diocese and The Episcopal Church.) The Anglican Church in North America, formed by four of the former TEC dioceses and the great majority of the departing congregations, now claims an average attendance at principal services of over 80,000. The majority of these are former Episcopalians, and their departure has contributed to the decline in TEC's attendance in the USA from 823,000 in 2003 to 624,000 in 2013.

To what extent the consecration of Vicky Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire (in defiance of the Primates of the Anglican Communion) in 2003, the ministry of Katharine Jefferts Schori as Presiding Bishop since 2006, or any of the individual decisions of recent General Conventions has hastened the decline, it is impossible to determine.

Consequences

Although the departure of conservatives is one of the reasons for the overall decline, the fact that liberal dioceses are declining more swiftly than more conservative dioceses means, paradoxically, that the latter are gaining slightly in numerical strength as a proportion of the whole church. Thus, for example, the share of TEC's attendance enjoyed by the 20 dioceses of Province 4 (the heart of the conservative South) rose from 24% in 2003 to 26% in 2013.

Thus far, this gradual shift has had no impact on TEC's national stance, however. The reason for this is that TEC is a confederal, not a unitary church. In important votes in the House of Deputies of its General Convention, each diocesan deputation casts a single block vote in each 'order' (clergy and lay). And the dioceses are by no means equal in size. In Province 4 the average diocese has 8,157 people in church on the average Sunday. By contrast, in the now predominantly liberal Province 5 (the eastern Mid-West, where Anglo-Catholics sub-divided the original state dioceses so that the bishop would be