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200 Days to Go

Peter Ould on the Results
from Diocesan Synods



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- Malcolm Gray on Fatima
- Bishop Roald Flemestad considers the Union of Scranton

parish directory

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BOURNEMOUTH **St Francis of Assisi, Charminster Road (corner of East Way)** *A Forward in Faith Parish* under the care of the Bishop of Richmond. *Resolutions ABC*. Sunday: 8am Low Mass, Parish Mass 10am, Evening Prayer and Benediction 6.30pm - first Sunday of each month and major festivals. For information about all services during the Interregnum contact Barbara Geatrell 01425 470370 or Hubert Allen 01202 511845 (Parish Office) Churchwardens www.stfrancis-bournemouth.org.uk

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

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

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

BRISTOL **Christ Church, Broad Street, Old City Centre BS1 2EJ** *Resolutions ABC*. Sunday 11am Choral Eucharist, 6.30pm Choral Evensong with Anthem and Sermon. Georgian gem, Prayer Book services, robed men and boys' choir, Renatus Harris organ. Tues, Thurs and major holy days: 1.05pm Eucharist. Regular recitals and concerts

(see website). Parish Priest: Fr Richard Hoyal 0117 9706776 www.christchurchcitybristol.org

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

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

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

CHARD **The Good Shepherd, Fumham**. *Resolutions ABC* Sunday: Sung Mass 9.45am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction (3rd Sunday only) 6pm. Weekday Masses: Tues 10am. Contact: Heather McCann on 01460 64531

CHELMSFORD **The Ascension, Maltese Road (10 minutes walk from the station)** *A Forward in Faith Parish under the Bishop of Richmond*. Sunday: Mass 8am; Parish Mass 9am followed by Parish Breakfast. Weekdays: Tues 7pm, Wed 9.30am, Fri 8am, Sat 10am. Modern rite, Traditional ceremonial. Parish Priest: Fr Ivor Morris 01245 353914 www.ascensionchelmsford.org

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

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

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

EASTBOURNE **St Saviour's** *A Forward in Faith Parish with Resolution ABC*. Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Solemn Mass 10.30am. Daily Mass and Office. Details and information from Fr Jeffery Gunn 01323 722317 www.stsaviourseastbourne.org.uk

FOLKESTONE **Kent, St Peter on the East Cliff** *A Forward in Faith Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richmond*. *Resolutions ABC*. Sunday: 8am Low Mass, 10.30am Solemn Mass, 6pm Evensong. Weekday Masses: Mon 10.30am, Tues 7pm, Thur 12 noon, Sat 8am. Daily Offices. During Interregnum: 01303 254472 www.stpetersfolkestone.org.uk

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

HARLOW **St Mary Magdalene Harlow Common** (southern side of Harlow, Chelmsford diocese) *Resolutions ABC*. Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Parish Mass 10.30am, Evening Service and Benediction 6.30pm. Weekday Masses: Tues 7.30pm (preceded by Exposition at 7pm); Wed 9.30am; Thurs 10am; Sat 9.30am. Vicar: Fr John Corby ssc 01279 453848

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LONDON N17 **St Benet Fink, Walpole Road, Tottenham** *A Forward in Faith Parish under the care of the Bishop of Fulham*. Sunday: Sung Mass 10am. Friday: Low Mass 9.30am. Contact Fr James Hill - 0208 888 4541

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

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

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

LONDON SE16 **St Mary Rotherhithe, St Marychurch Street SE16 4JE** *A Fulham Parish*. Sunday: Solemn Mass 9.30am, Evening Prayer 6pm, Benediction monthly. Mass times: Tues 12 noon; Wed 9.15am School Mass; Thur 6pm; Fri 9.30am; Sat 9.30am. Tube: Jubilee Line Bermondsey/Canada Water. Historic Mayflower Church. Visitors most welcome. Fr Mark Nicholls ssc 0207 394 3394

LONDON SE18 **St Nicholas - the Ancient Parish Church - St Nicholas Road, Plumstead**. *A Forward in Faith Parish under the*

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LEAD STORY

Women bishops – the numbers

Peter Ould looks at the results of the diocesan votes on the legislation and their implications for future decision-making

All 44 dioceses have voted and the results are in. The women bishops legislation will return to Synod in the new year and will see the critical decision. Which way will the vote go?

At first, looking at the results from the Dioceses, it seems a foregone conclusion. The

table below shows the votes in the different dioceses and you can see that overall the numbers voting 'No' were around 23% in the houses of clergy and laity.

The statistics

The final results have come in as follows:

| For | | | Against | | |
|---------|--------|-------|---------|--------|-------|
| Bishops | Clergy | Laity | Bishops | Clergy | Laity |
| 75 | 1504 | 1644 | 13 | 461 | 489 |
| | 23.5% | | | 22.9% | |

However, just because the diocesan synods voted in a particular way doesn't mean that General Synod will. General Synod has always been more conservative than diocesan synods (and in the same way diocesan synods tend to be more liberal than the collective deanery synods).

So the vote is not a foregone conclusion yet.

Looking back at 1992

Let's look back at 1992 and the women priests vote. Here are the Diocesan votes from the 1990 consultation process.

| For | | | Against | | |
|---------|--------|-------|---------|--------|-------|
| Bishops | Clergy | Laity | Bishops | Clergy | Laity |
| 74 | 2246 | 2306 | 25 | 1126 | 1085 |
| | 33.4% | | | 32.0% | |

At this point during the process last time round, the 'Against' figures in the dioceses were about 40% higher than they currently are. When compared to the final voting figures (clergy 29.6% for No and laity 32.7% for No), they indicate that support for ordaining women was higher in General Synod for clergy than in diocesan synods and equivalent for laity.

Other things being equal then, we would expect neither house this time round to reach the necessary 33.3% blocking level to prevent a super-majority being achieved (General Synod votes of this kind require a two-thirds majority in all three houses).

Provision for dissenters

But if only it were that simple. When the vote was undertaken in 1992 it was on the basis of robust protection for dissenters. Parishes that objected to women bishops could effectively take themselves out of the geographical diocesan system and place themselves under a 'flying bishop'.

The motion in 1992 only received a super-majority because it was understood that those who objected were being 'looked after' and this

prompted many who were in two minds to vote in favour of the motion.

Last year General Synod voted on a number of amendments which sought to provide equivalent protection for dissenters under statutory powers (as opposed to just a Code of Practice). The numbers in General Synod supporting such a motion were not enough (50%) to get such a motion onto the proposed Act, but they were enough to compose more than enough votes to block a super-majority in favour of women bishops at this point.

At the time I wrote:

'I suggest that the chances of the vote failing at the last hurdle are greater than some might think, especially given the fact that the most conservative amendment (separate dioceses for dissenters) received the support of 32% of those who voted (remember it needs just over a third – 33.3% – to say 'no' for the whole measure to fail). Given that the votes don't always fall equally in each House, the chances that the final vote will fail in one or more House (I would suggest in the House of Bishops or Laity is most likely) is not insubstantial.'

Conservative

Eighteen months on and we have a newly elected General Synod which most commentators agree is as conservative, if not slightly more so, than the last one. Whilst it is very unlikely that there will be a mass 'rebellion' in the House of Bishops, if enough laity were concerned about providing suitably robust safeguards for dissenters then it is still possible for the legislation to fail next year.

Although there is clearly a super-majority in favour of women bishops in General Synod, are there a number of Synod members who would be prepared to push the whole debate off the schedule for five years (until the next General Synod is elected) in order to insist on a statutory basis for the protection of those who dissent?

A substantial minority

Think this idea far-fetched? Consider this. I analysed *all* the votes at diocesan synods since the start of October, not just for the main motion on the substantive legislation but also secondary motions seeking to affirm some form of greater statutory protection (as envisaged by the Archbishops last year and as articulated in the CEEC motion that was offered at several diocesan synods.

On average, for those synods that had such a secondary vote, the overall vote against the substantive motion was 28.0%, but the % in favour of some form of more practical accommodation for dissenters was a staggering 40.7% (1.45 times the amount of votes). Apply this multiplier to the diocesan vote figures above and suddenly the 23.5% and 22.9% clergy and laity opposing the motion becomes 34.2% and 33.3% – exactly the kind of figures necessary to dump the legislation. If you just examine the votes for a motion similar to that presented by the Archbishops, the multiplier becomes 1.64, easily enough to kick the idea of women bishops into touch for a decade.

All the evidence points in one direction – there is a substantial minority, enough to wreck the legislation, that believes we should have women bishops but also believes that a non-statutory Code of Practice is not sufficient to protect dissenters.

If enough of this minority decide to vote against the substantive motion on this basis, there is more than an outside chance that they will succeed. The question now is whether the political will for such an action exists among this minority. It is that decision which will settle the matter just a few months from now. **ND**

What might have been said

John Richardson on Christianity, capitalism and the St Paul's protestors

What's wrong with the world's financial markets is not rocket science, though the technical issues involved may look like it. In April 2007, an English financier named Henry Maxey wrote an article titled 'Cracking the Credit Market Code' which explained precisely why we were heading then for where we are now. To the novice, however, his account of 'credit' and 'leverage', 'liquidity' and 'collateralized debt obligations' is completely baffling. Maxey likened the global financial system to Willy Wonka's gobstoppers: 'You can suck 'em and suck 'em and suck 'em, and they'll never get any smaller.' The market in loans would keep on making profit for everyone indefinitely.

Stage-fright

The trouble was, most people couldn't see the fallacy. The credit bubble, Maxey wrote, 'was the financial world's own perpetual motion machine, yet the ridicule was reserved for those who ... warned about the absurdity of the output.' So if even the experts couldn't see (or wouldn't admit to) the problems, how could the crash have been avoided?

Cue the Church of England, which was briefly pushed into the limelight when the grounds of St Paul's Cathedral were occupied recently by protestors. Unfortunately, instead of coming out with their lines, the clergy suffered a collective bout of stage-fright! As a result, a great opportunity was lost. The best thing the Church seemed to be able to come up with was the Archbishop of Canterbury's support for a new 'Robin Hood' tax – in other words, another financial instrument to add to the pile.

But what might have been a better response, given

the complexity of the issues involved? The first answer in *any* realm of public responsibility lies in the model Jesus Christ set before his followers, as the Lord of all who nevertheless came 'not to be served, but to serve.' I remember a lecturer many years ago who argued that this ought to be the guiding principle of Christians in the arts. The first goal of the artist, he said, should not be self-expression but service of others. The answer to the question, 'What should I paint or sculpt or design?' should be, 'What could I paint or sculpt or design that would be of benefit to someone else?'

Simple principles

Yet this can apply to financiers as much as to artists. The guiding principle here should be not 'How much money can we make?' but, 'How can I best be of service?' In every occupation and relationship, those who claim to follow Christ should follow his example of being 'the servant of all.' After that, there are the basic principles of honesty and integrity, which should not be confined to private life. 'By justice a king gives a country stability,' says the book of Proverbs, 'but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down' (29.4). In the end, bribery, corruption and greed destroy businesses and communities. But someone will say, 'This is impossible – it's a dog eat dog world.' To this, we can only reply, do you want to live like an animal, or like a human being made in the image of God? Do you want to follow the herd, or follow the Master? If people ask what the Christian 'take' is on something as profound as global finance, they must not complain if the answer turns out to be simple to define but hard to apply. Maybe that's life. **ND**

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Nicolas Stebbing CR reflects on some of the uncomfortable aspects of the parable and some useful ways in which we can respond to it

I don't much like this story of the ten virgins. That's partly because I don't much like the young ladies themselves. The foolish ones must have been very foolish to come with lamps or torches to a wedding banquet, and forget the oil! One imagines them as silly, chatty, giggling creatures without a brain in their heads. But the wise girls are not much more attractive. There is something rather smug about them. They are in the right; they have oil. They are not going to share it. They know perfectly well the foolish girls will not have time to buy oil and get back for the feast, but they are not bothered. It serves them right.

This picture becomes a bit more disturbing when we remember that the early Church undoubtedly identified itself with the prudent virgins and has gone on doing so ever since. *There* is a picture of Christian complacency which is not much bothered with those left outside, so long as we are OK. I have a horrid fear that it is only too true.

The closed door

And that leads on to my second reason for finding this story uncomfortable, to say the least. There is a dreadful finality about the *door*. When the bridegroom comes they all go in and the door is closed. That's it. There is no suggestion the door can ever be opened again. No chance now for the foolish girls. They are left outside in perpetual darkness while the party goes on inside. Worse still, when the Bridegroom comes to the door he says 'I do not know you.' Not just, 'Sorry girls, you're too late for the party, we've finished the food,' but an utter rejection: 'I do not know you.'

The Jews who first heard this story would have found it very shocking. In a village wedding of the time – and in Palestine today – everyone in the village goes to the wedding party. The door would never be closed. The bridegroom would certainly not say

'I do not know you' to people in his own village. But then this story is not meant to be bland and comforting. It reminds us that the stakes are high. This was the belief of the early Church. The Lord would soon return; the world would end; those not ready to enter with him would be left behind eternally. That's it.

Left outside

And that is what is really uncomfortable about the story. We don't like to think like that today. We don't want to imagine that vast

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numbers of people are going to be left outside the kingdom of God when all comes to an end. Yes, maybe a few like Hitler, Stalin, Saddam Hussein and a few people I could name in Zimbabwe; maybe, drug pushers, gang leaders and sex traffickers as well. But surely all our friends and family and the nice ordinary people who live in this world, surely God will welcome them. I hope he does. I hope very much that God shares our universalist viewpoint. There is some evidence in the Gospels that he does, but not a lot. The picture given by most of the New Testament, certainly by the writings of John, is that the majority will be left out; and as Matthew puts it more than once, there will be much wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Preparation

What should our response be to this story? I will suggest three:

The first is a bit moralistic but it concerns the oil. The main point of this parable is simply to warn people to get ready, to prepare for the coming of Jesus. This is typical of St Matthew. He

puts a great deal of teaching into his Gospel about how to live the Christian life. That is what the Sermon on the Mount tells us. Matthew knows we are not saved by obedience to the law, but if we make no attempt to keep the law of Christ, then it won't be any good us saying 'Lord, Lord' when we meet him. According to Matthew he will say 'I never knew you.' We are all great procrastinators. We put off big things and small things. One good thing to do as we come up to Advent and have to prepare for Christmas is to think of the good resolutions we have made, and have not kept, or the ones we think we should make but have not got round to.

The bad habits we know we should give up, some time; the good things we know we need to start doing. That sounds pretty boring, but it isn't really. Often the things we really dread doing turn out to change our lives, like going to confession for the first time. Even the little things – like smiling at people, or taking a morning walk, can turn out to improve the quality of our life in an astonishing way.

Mission

Secondly, we can start bothering about the equivalent of the foolish virgins. Once we are sure we have put oil in our own lamps we need to worry about those who haven't. That is mission, and mission is not just about getting people into church so that the church is nice and full and can pay its quota. Mission changes people's lives and saves their souls. Quite what saving souls means now, and how we should go about it, demands a lot of attention and a lot of discussion. But mission, preaching the Gospel, inviting people into the Kingdom of God is fundamental to Christian life. Without that element we really do become a pious, complacent little club.

A wonderful future

My third point is rather different. The story ends with a party; well,

more than a party, a feast – a party literally to end all parties. We forget that. We can get so fixated on the fate of those who don't make it that we can forget what a wonderful future there is for those who do. The Gospel is full of warnings, exhortations, threats, predictions about the awful things that will happen to people who do not repent and turn and follow Jesus. Yet it is good news and it promises us a wonderful ending. The story of the ten virgins really ought to start with that ending and work backwards.

This is hope – not a kind of foolish optimism that everything will turn out OK, but the sure knowledge that God is waiting for us, waiting for us with joy, light, laughter and all the really good things about life. Just beyond that doorway we call death there is a kind of life that turns out to be the thing we most desire in all the world, God. And God is not a static being to be adored from afar; he is a trinity of

being who invites us amazingly into the heart of that trinity to share in the love that is the source of all life. That is what should make us *want* to fill the lamps with oil, to do all that work of getting ready – we really do not want

inviting people into the Kingdom of God is fundamental to Christian life


to miss out on what God is offering; and the joy of getting ready for it now is that we find some foretaste of that new life comes to us now, before we even go through the gate of death.

Death

Those of us who read Harry Potter know how this is a major theme of the books. Voldemort is terrified of dying

and all his evil actions are directed towards defeating death. Dumbledore tells him, 'Death is not the worst thing that can happen to a person.' But he doesn't believe it. Harry does come to believe it and can go through death because of it.

Dumbledore could almost be thinking of the ten virgins when he says to Harry, 'For the well-organized mind, death is just another great adventure.' Ron Weasley thinks he is barking, brilliant, but barking. But Harry learns early on that there are far worse things than death. Have we learnt that, properly, and put it at the heart of our Christian faith?

Perhaps C.S. Lewis catches it best at the end of his Narnia stories when he meets the children in the place we call death and tells them, 'The term is over; the holidays have begun. The night is ended. This is the morning.' Isn't it worth getting ourselves ready for that, and telling everyone else about it? 

Women Bishops Legislation: A Statement from the Catholic Group in Synod

A quarter of Church of England Dioceses vote for proper provision for traditionalists

While Dioceses showed overall support for women bishops, a quarter of Dioceses voted for proper provision to be made for those who are unable in conscience to accept the oversight of women bishops. This figure is highly significant, given the need for a two-thirds majority for the legislation in all three Houses of General Synod; put bluntly, the legislation needs to be amended if its safe passage through the Synod is to be guaranteed.

The legislation as currently drafted provides neither for conservative Catholics in the Church of England, who need bishops and priests ordained by male bishops, nor for conservative Evangelicals who could not accept the oversight of a woman bishop on scriptural grounds. It relies on a Code of Practice to fill out its provisions – a draft of the Code will be discussed by the House of Bishops in December, and by the General Synod in February. General Synod members will want to scrutinise the draft Code carefully to see how the draft legislation is seen as working in practice, and whether it provides fairly and graciously for the significant minority of traditionalists.

It is likely that the February Synod will also debate a motion calling on the House of Bishops to exercise its powers to amend the Measure in the manner of the amendment jointly proposed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in July 2010 – an amendment which commanded an overall majority of the Synod at the time, and could have gone a long way to meeting the needs of traditionalists.

40% of the members of the current Synod are new; it is vital that they have the opportunity to consider these issues properly before the Synod comes to the Final Approval vote in July 2012. Members of the current Synod have already expressed their disquiet on legislation passed by the previous Synod, when they took the unprecedented step last July of refusing to approve a new Parochial Fees Order made under legislation passed by the previous Synod – effectively blocking implementation of that legislation.

Canon Simon Killwick, Chairman of the Catholic Group in General Synod, said, 'Final Approval of the current draft Women Bishops legislation is not a foregone conclusion; the best way to secure its safe passage would be to amend it to provide properly for traditionalists; modest amendment of the legislation, together with a suitably drafted Code of Practice could yet enable the Church of England to move forward together on women bishops in 2012. Failure to amend the legislation could result in the failure of the legislation at Final Approval, which would delay the introduction of women bishops for many years to come.'

Anglican Patrimony

Christopher Trundle reminds us of the impact of encounters with the Lord and the need for careful devotional preparation

‘**B**eloved in Christ, be it this Christmas Eve our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels: in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and with the Magi adore the Child lying in his Mother’s arms.’

Anglicans are, these days, prone to pre-empting the next liturgical season, particularly at this time of the year, when, seduced by society’s attempt to make Christmas start as early as possible, many begin to sing Christmas hymns and carols as early as the middle of Advent. And, yes, in this brief article at least, I join them – but bear with me.

These words of Milner-White, so familiar to us from the service of Nine Lessons and Carols from King’s College, Cambridge, will be repeated again (in slightly different versions) in churches and chapels the length of the land in the days approaching Christmas.

They aptly sum up the purpose of carol services, being, as they are, a form of preparation. We hear afresh the angels singing and go again to Bethlehem ‘in mind and heart’. It is, then, a sort of spiritual pilgrimage, and in some sense is not dissimilar to the Stations of the Cross. For here too the conflation of various events from the Christmas narrative (not least the inclusion of the Magi in this particular bidding) into one liturgy offers us the opportunity to reflect upon the gift of Our Saviour’s Incarnation.

Penitential feeling

Few, however, would associate the penitential and sombre feeling of Holy Week with Christmas. One notable dissenter is T.S. Eliot, whose famous *Journey of the Magi* is so often heard at Epiphany. Eliot, who wrote the poem about the time of his conversion from Unitarianism, took his first five lines from Lancelot Andrewes’s excellent *Nativity Sermon* of 1622:

‘A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For the journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.’

The poem continues with this sense of discomfort, and not even the encounter with that which they seek cures it:

‘...were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt.
I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.’

A profound effect

It is the Incarnation and the Passion which together accomplish our salvation, and here the Magus sees something of a conflation of the two. While we expect the celebration associated with the Birth of the Saviour and the realization of the plan of salvation, he sees the cost. Further, his encounter with the Word Made Flesh has a profound effect on his life, returning, as he does, to the pagan world and its ‘alien people’.

The celebrations of Christmas and Easter demand careful devotional preparation, and Eliot’s poem reminds us that encounters with the Lord rarely, if ever, leave people indifferent. The Child we will encounter in the cradle is our Saviour, but he will also be our Judge.

‘O God, who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thy only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our Judge; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen’ (*An Additional Collect for Christmastide*, from the Scottish Prayer Book). **ND**

‘Like stars appearing?’

ND is alone among top tabloids in not having a horoscope column. So, guys ‘n’ gals, though we may be put out to grass by *Gras*, we’re not gonna be outshone by the *Sun*. We’ve asked Astrologer AI to give you a unique glimpse at his 2012 predictions. Fooler versions can be downloaded from the General Synod website DuffGen@cofe.

January: Britain will now have yet another major Lottery: FINDA-BCP, launched to chime in with 350th birthday of 1662 book. To win the big K’s, you’ll need to find six copies of the BCP in any Anglican church. A tough ask, but as Dickie Hooker used to say, ‘You’ve got to be in it to win it.’

February: FiF Council follows offer of a gift to the Ordinariate by deciding to bail out the Euro. A spokes-father said: ‘The Euro, like the Holy Father, has got an apostolic succession going back to Rome’ (Puzzled? After watching TOWIE, Google EEC).

March: Repeating the last line of a hymn to be included as an Olympic sport. Team HTB tipped for gold, tipped for gold, tipped for gold.

April 1st: Sally Bercow becomes patron of movement for ordination of women in the Catholic Church. ‘I’m pleased to be No 1. C.O.W.’ tweets Sally.

May: Despite Aled Jones offering to wear a burka, BBC decides to ditch *Songs of Praise* to avoid offending Muslims, who don’t approve of hymn singing.

June: Giles ‘Gaffer’ Fraser to partner Wayne Rooney in England’s Euro 2012 squad. ‘Gaffer,’ e always put ‘is foot in it, and zat’s what football’s all about,’ says Capello.

July: So much fog rising from General Synod meeting discussing legislation for the ordination of ‘Betsy’s Bishops’, as the new gals on the block (bench?) are called, that the stars are blacked out and I can’t predict. Also the CRAPNAV that I’ve used to navigate round Synod has died.

What next for you, ‘Trad Lads (and Lasses)?’ Anyone got Ed T’s new blog address?

Alan Edwards

Travellers' Tales

Neal Wood considers a stop in the Loire: Candes-Saint-Martin

Reading about St Martin of Tours in last month's *ND* reminded me of a vacation last year in Candes-Saint-Martin on the banks of the Loire. This picturesque village, with its tightly clustered houses built in the local white tuffeau stone, is one of the *Plus Beaux Villages de France* and commands breath-taking views over the confluence of the rivers Vienne and Loire. Aside from its situation, Candes' main attraction is the collegiate church of St Martin, dedicated to the soldier-turned-bishop who founded a school, a priory and a chapel dedicated to St Maurice here. St Martin clearly had great affection for this place and it was on a visit here from Tours, apparently to mediate in a local quarrel, that he died in 397. Such was his reputation that his place of death became a centre of pilgrimage. The church, started in 1175, with a magnificent vaulted porch, sits grandly at the upper end of a small sloping cobbled square. On entering, it has the feel of a vast spacious hall – cool in the hottest of summers – yet possessing a special atmosphere. In the north chapel, a floor slab marks the spot where St Martin is alleged to have died – the site of his chapel of St Maurice.

Fontevraud Abbey

One of the advantages of choosing Candes as a base is that there is much of interest to see without travelling too far. Just five kilometres away is Fontevraud Abbey (built 1105–1160), one of the largest and finest monasteries in France and where Eleanor of Aquitaine ended her days: she is buried here alongside her husband Henry II and their son, Richard the Lionheart. After the Revolution, Napoleon turned the monastery into a prison, which eventually closed in 1963 and was subsequently designated a *Monument Historique*. This important site has, during the last few years, been much improved for visitors: it is a definite must-see. Directly across the river from Candes is the *appellation d'origine contrôlée* region of Bourgueil, with its unbroken panorama of vines. The town of Bourgueil itself is generally a quiet place, except on Tuesdays and Saturdays which are market days. You cannot say that you truly *know* France until you have visited a local market: the one in Bourgueil spreads over several streets and is easy to get lost among the stalls laden with local produce. In the Place de l'Église is a small *Maison des Vins* operated by a syndicate of more than eighty local domaine owners who sell their wines (red and rosé, made mostly from the Cabernet Franc grape) where they are all available for tasting, helpfully explained and, most importantly, sold at a reasonable price. Most will not be found in the local supermarket.

The châteaux

This is the Loire, so what of the châteaux? Chinon and Usse are both a twenty-minute drive from Candes: Azay-le-Rideau, Montreuil-Bellay and Montgeoffroy are less than an hour's drive; Chenonceaux and Amboise are slightly further. Closest is Montsoreau, the next village to Candes, though they are in different *départements*, it is not easy to see where one settlement ends and the other starts. Although a shadow of its former self, the château of Montsoreau is a 'proper' castle and stands on the quayside just feet from the river. Only eleven kilometres along the river is Saumur: a good place to explore, this charming town is dominated by its own turreted château which houses the *Musée des Arts Décoratifs*. There are four main churches here, all worth visiting, yet the one usually overlooked (despite its huge dome) is Notre-Dame des Ardilliers: during the seventeenth century, when the town was a centre of deep-rooted Protestantism, the pro-Catholic government encouraged pilgrimages to this church. This area of Saumur soon became renowned for the manufacture of rosaries.

Church at Cunault

Having rented a modernized eighteenth-century house in Candes with its own river frontage (dinner on the terrace with such a spectacular view is *still* much missed), we were but a few minutes' walk from the church – perfect for reciting the morning and evening offices – yet Sunday Mass is celebrated there only once every six weeks. So where for Mass? We went twenty-four kilometres along the river to Cunault for the 11.15am Mass at the magnificent church of Notre-Dame: a masterpiece of Romanesque architecture. It was well attended – the congregation coming from a wide area, which people seem willing to do if the standard of worship is high.

Where for lunch? Spoilt for choice here, though I would recommend the Helianthe Restaurant in Turquant (a tiny village between Candes and Saumur) set in the troglodyte caves: their *ragoût de poisson* was superb. Bon appétit! *ND*



faith of our fathers

Arthur Middleton on the way of our salvation

In his *Confessions*, Augustine explains why only the Incarnation satisfies. During his spiritual journey, he was greatly attracted by the philosophy of the Platonists. There he found much that was close in substance to the Christian Gospel. They seemed to know, without saying it as such, that 'in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' They understood that 'the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' They believed in the immaterial soul. But that God, the Word, 'was made flesh and dwelt among us' he did not find in their books.

He wrote that the Platonists accepted that the Word 'was born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' But they did not say 'he came unto his own, and his own received him not' or that 'to all who received him, who believed in his name, to them he gave power to become children of God.' That would have been too earthy for these philosophical idealists. They were like people who 'from some wooden mountain top see the land of peace, without being able to find the way there.' They are like many people around us today.

Divinity and humanity

To find the way, we need the revelation. We cannot do it by ourselves. We can reach only the point where we 'We see the land of peace without being able to find a way there.' In a post-Christian age the values of a godless culture will not take us there. Nothing but the Incarnation, the coming of God as man, will do. Folk religion, New Age philosophy, will not take us either. Christmas celebrates this coming of God as man, the uniting of divinity with the human when we sing *The Holly Bears a Berry*, which is the symbol of blood, of suffering divinity in earth's mess.

In St Luke we read about Simeon telling us 'Now mine eyes have seen thy

salvation' and prophesying to Mary of the future life and death of Jesus. Simeon adds, 'And a sword shall pierce your soul also.' This is Mary's real glory, what sets her forever apart from every human being – that a sword pierced her soul as she surrendered her Son, so that he might die for the salvation of the world.

The terrible uniqueness of that event has been captured in the Requiem of the Russian poet Anna Akhmatova:

Mary Magdalene beat
her breasts and sobbed,
His disciples stone-faced stared,
His mother stood apart.
No other looked
into her secret eyes.
No-one dared.

This Russian woman's poem comes out of the terrible experience of seeing her son jailed in one of Stalin's prisons. Akhmatova's passion reminds us of Mary's particular grandeur. At her moment of joy, her mind was seared with the warning of future pain, as she was told that she would be expected to sacrifice her firstborn son so that the sins of the world might be forgiven.

The message of the Incarnation, is one of joy and is a far cry from the artificial cheeriness of high street and supermarket shopping. Those for whom material things have become the Body and Blood of life, cannot look into the eyes of Mary any more than Akhmatova's onlookers could. The materialism of our times is conditioned so as not to remind us of anything like this, but to give a false sense of well-being where material things are the way of salvation.

Church and Sacraments

The Incarnation and Cross of Christ enable us to pray: 'Keep, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy Church with thy perpetual mercy; and ... lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

We pray for the Church and for our salvation. We cannot think adequately



of salvation without calling to mind the Church. We cannot be saved alone and the Church is the instrument of salvation, the extension of the Incarnation. Richard Hooker prefaces his discussion of the Church and Sacraments, with an exposition of the Chalcedonian definition of the Incarnation. For him the Sacraments are the means by which the purpose of the Incarnation is effected in us, namely the union of the soul with God. They are the medicine that cures the world.

God's family

Most Christians accept this; but some still think of religion as a matter between a person and his Maker and would brook no suggestion of any intermediary. Today we realize that God made us to live in families, that he redeemed us in families, and that the Church is his family *par excellence*, not some ecclesiastical organization inimical to the spirit of true religion, but the beloved society, the ark of salvation.

It is the channel of God's mercy, the realm of grace, where in Christ we are taken to participate in the life Christ lives with the Father in the Holy Spirit. We pray that he will keep the Church with his perpetual mercy.

Incarnation and Cross saved the world, because these tools of God were expressive of values rooted in life, God's own life manifested in a Son and given that we might have such life – the values of self-giving, self-offering, love, righteousness, justice and peace. This is salvation. **ND**

The Federation of Catholic Priests

A Catholic Society looks to a bright future

At a recent meeting of the National Executive of the Federation of Catholic Priests (FCP) Fr Peter Walsh was elected as their new Chairman. Fr Peter, 46, from the Diocese of Chester, spoke of his delight at the appointment.

‘I pray for a joyful future for traditional Catholic Priests within the Church of England. I believe that we can and should wherever possible work together with the great breadth of the Church of England. I hope as national chairman to encourage my fellow Priests in FCP to discover again the joy of their wonderful vocation and to speak out as necessary on behalf of FCP members.’

The Federation of Catholic Priests was founded in 1917 to foster priestly vocation within the Church of England. Today it continues to seek to encourage mutual support in propagating, maintaining and defending Catholic doctrine and practice within a traditional understanding of priesthood.

After his election as Chairman Fr Peter spoke of the new beginnings for FCP.

‘We seek to welcome all who explore a gentle and spiritual understanding of sacramental Priesthood. A number of our brethren have recently journeyed to the Ordinariate.

We support them and others who reflect upon their future. We also seek to offer a positive and encouraging future for men who remain in the Church of England

looking towards a deepening of a Catholic understanding of worship, spirituality and evangelisation.’

‘Many members of FCP seek a positive future for Anglican Catholics in the Church of England and we want to uphold them and encourage them in that journey of faith. It is the prayer of the FCP to work together for the unity of the Church for which Christ himself prayed so that *‘we may all be one’* and to serve our communities with joyful faithfulness.’ **ND**



Do you have a WWJD side?

Among the various side-effects and consequences arising from the ‘anti-capitalist protest’ outside St Paul’s Cathedral, two unexpected ones struck me with particular force. The first – in the early days – was the apparent redefinition of ‘senior cleric’, as in ‘Senior cleric resigns’, though this side of things took an unexpected turn when senior clerics did actually start resigning. The second was the reappearance of a once popular phrase, utilized by the protestors on at least one banner and widely used in media coverage of the unfolding saga: ‘What would Jesus do?’

This short, simple question has the appearance of profundity and great spiritual wisdom. But it is misguided for two reasons. The first is that none of us is Jesus Christ. The second is that

this is not the Holy Land of the first century. These two incontrovertible facts mean that none of us can ever know with certainty what Jesus – who in his Incarnation was an historical figure set in a particular time and place in history – would do when faced with a twenty-first-century scenario. The Gospels give us a good understanding of his beliefs and principles (and it is our duty to shape our own lives in accordance with them so far as we can), but they cannot be stretched into a detailed question-and-answer resource for every tricky situation thrown up by modern Western society.

This means that we may say with a degree of certainty that Jesus had a radical understanding of equality, based on the understanding that all human beings are beloved sons and

daughters of God. But we are not justified in extrapolating from that the idea that ‘Jesus was a socialist.’ To make such a claim is anachronistic in the extreme. Yet one protestor, interviewed by the BBC, and no doubt inspired by the question WWJD? piously said just that.

What we do know about Jesus is that he had a habit of giving short shrift to religious and quasi-religious figures who asked him smug, self-satisfied questions in the hope of catching him out or pushing him into a corner. WWJD? is a useful question for us to consider inwardly when making personal decisions. It is not, on its own, a valid method of forming policy or making judgements for or by Church or state.

Ian McCormack

devotional

A consistent Christian life

William Law

The people portrayed in the *Serious Call* think they are Christians, but only two or three are prepared to live consistent Christian lives according to Christ's standard. Could he stab them into knowledge of their state? Could he paint their portraits and invite them to read in them the measure of their unfaithfulness?

Julius, the formal Christian is very fearful of missing his prayers, and whom the parish consider to be sick if he is not in church. *Caecus* is the rich man, of good breeding and very fine parts and the embodiment of self-conceit. He no more suspects himself of pride than he suspects his wants of sense. *Calidus* the busy merchant lives in perpetual rush and whirl, that must have killed him long ago and resolves to leave town on Saturday and make Sunday a day of quiet and refreshment in the country.

Flavia would be a miracle of piety if she was as careful of her soul as she is of her body. *Caelia*, the grumbler, is an exhortation to contentment. *Fulvius*, the youth of leisured disorder, preaches the disciplined life. *Mundanus*, the successful man of business, teaches the necessity of heavenly

mindfulness. *Susurrus*, the unkind gossip, becomes an argument for the habit of kindly intercession.

But there are other characters, which portray with great attractiveness the beauty of the Christian life, like *Ouranius*, the good and holy priest, full of the spirit of the Gospel, watching, labouring and praying for a poor country village. Every soul in it is as dear to him as himself, and he loves them all as he loves himself; because he prays for them all as often as he prays for himself. *Cognatus* is a sober clergyman of good repute in the world and well esteemed in his parish. All his parishioners would say; he is an honest man, and very notable at making a bargain. His overriding concern is to leave a sizeable sum of money he has raised from his two livings for his niece. Law then considers the many kind things that *Cognatus* might have done with his money, including paying his curate a living wage, and caring for his people as much as for the state of the markets, and finally ends: 'Could it be said that a life thus governed by the spirit of the Gospel must be dull and melancholy, if compared with that of raising a fortune for a niece?'

The *Serious Call* is a direct attack on the pseudo-Christian life of the eighteenth century. 'Would you know who is the greatest saint of the world?' writes Law:

'It is not he who prays most, or fasts most; it is not he who gives most alms, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity or justice; but it is he who is always thankful to God, who wills everything that God willeth' **ND**

(From William Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, edited by Arthur Middleton)

Hospitality is a gift of the Holy Spirit and as such is used by the Lord to build up the Body of Christ and extend his Kingdom. As the Christmas season approaches with all its hospitable opportunities it is timely to ask the questions: 'is this a gift I have and am I being a faithful steward of it?' There are some people who do not have either the gift or the wherewithal to offer hospitality; but there will be some readers who, although reticent to be hospitable, ought to be more confident in opening up their home to others. There is no doubt that where hospitality is offered the Holy Spirit is at work.

In reading the Gospels we are aware that although 'there was no room at the inn' the holy family began their ministry through welcoming both the shepherds and the magi to their temporary home. Throughout the ministry of Jesus the evangelists report how Jesus was able to teach and heal because individuals and families 'welcomed him into their home.'

We are told in Acts chapter 2 that the 'community of the resurrection' shared their meals in each other's homes 'with

Ghostly Counsel

Hospitality

Andy Hawes is Warden of Edenham Regional Retreat House

unaffected joy.' The 'house church movement' of the early church was indeed founded on the gift of hospitality. Having lived with an 'open door policy' as a parish priest and retreat house warden for the best part of thirty years I do not have a romantic or idealistic view of hospitality. To begin with it is hard physical work – the preparation and clearing up of food, drink, rooms is often hidden and 'thankless'. All true hospitality has a cost and very little of it is financial. If you resist the impulse to be hospitable – to send that invitation or make that call – is it just 'deadly sloth' that is the cause? If it is, it needs kicking out of the house immediately.

There is also present in the ministry

of hospitality a call to be 'vulnerable'. We are often resistant to 'opening up' our homes, because we are fearful of opening up our hearts and lives to others. This is understandable but can provide a certain lack of faith in God and his presence in others, and a regrettable 'hardness of heart'. The truth about hospitality is that it is a challenge to live a 'gospel-shaped' life: it is about giving and receiving, at looking at the needs of others rather than ourselves. It is also 'Christ-centred' for in the exercise of Christian hospitality the Christ 'in me' welcomes the Christ 'in you.' In so many ways the fellowship of the table anticipates the fellowship of the Eucharist. This in turn is a foretaste of the heaven – which has 'many resting places.' We ought always to remember that God is a God of hospitality. 'Behold I stand at the door and knock, to whoever opens the door my Father and I will come in and sit and eat with him.'

Put all this into your prayers. Ask for guidance as to how you should be hospitable. As the Letter to the Hebrews teaches us, many, by welcoming others, 'have entertained angels unawares.'

My father is glorified by this... That you bear much fruit... And become my disciples

The Bishop of Plymouth's devotional address for Forward in Faith Assembly

It is only when we bear fruit that we can claim to be disciples! How often I get that the wrong way round. Much of what drives my discipleship is the thought that at some point, later, I will bear fruit, I don't see much of it being borne now, but that's alright, it will get better later; at some point in the future when I have followed for long enough, or at a greater depth, or in a more faithful way – then my discipleship might result in some fruit. But the Father is glorified by the bearing of fruit which itself is discipleship.

Age of revolution

Tomorrow is the feast of St Teresa of Avila, born in holy week 1515 – she entered a Carmelite convent aged twenty-one to discover that the rule was not demanding enough and in 1562 she, having reformed the rule and tightened it up, began to live a new rule and created what we now know as the discalced Carmelites

She lived in an age that frankly was not very different from our own. It was truly an age of revolution both socially and in terms of faith; exploration was pushing at the borders of the known and understood... And just two years after Teresa was born Martin Luther had begun that which we now know as the Protestant Reformation. She was truly a child nurtured in an atmosphere of change and challenge – revolution and revolt – and these were things from which she did not seek to be protected. In fact the social and political melting pot of European life in the mid-sixteenth century provided Teresa with the baggage for her journey... into the heart and mind of God and it was also the luggage with which she returned.

Encountering the divine

But it was the encounter with the divine that made it possible for Teresa to make sense of the baggage with all of its conflict and tension, to make such sense of it that it might become an ordered set of gifts to be received afresh from the hand of the giver of life. It is said that Teresa was able to enter into the divine presence with her pen in her hand and thereby record for others what she had seen and heard. Her writings reflect in a very personal way the richness of her own encounter with her Lord.

For Teresa of Avila this surge of the heart and look towards heaven, this prayer, has far more to do with the vital reality of God here and now and in all times and all places than it does with a particular activity, liturgical form, or time of day. Teresa's writings *are* about prayer...but first and

foremost because they are about God and his dealings with us...and prayer is for her, the atmosphere which enables our relationship with God to develop and grow.

Being one

For her nothing was more real than God and his love and his providential care and concern. She not only lived for him, she lived in him and with him. Her greatness consists not in what she tells us about herself but in what she tells us about God. And she can tell us so profoundly because of

her in depth abiding, her remaining... persistently, constantly and, we now know, eternally with him...being one with him.

The reality of the Kingdom, in its fullness...of life in its completeness...is in Christ. As the Word of God engaged

with the people of his day he did so from his place of security and confidence – that is, his oneness with the Father and it is this unity with the Father which produces the fruit of the Kingdom. The fruit of God's love is borne to the world as a result of the unity between the Son and the Father, a unity into which Teresa was grafted by the Holy Spirit in precisely the same way as you and me.

'A precious price'

Our bearing fruit arises because we have been made one with God, and the deeper and more profound that unity becomes, the more fruit we can bear and the greater and deeper will be our resulting discipleship. Towards the end of Teresa's life she said, 'Oh my Lord how true it is that whoever works for you is paid in troubles! And what a precious price to those who love you if we understand its value!'

One of the significant moments in Teresa's life, a moment of profound conversion, occurred as she was praying before a statue of Christ being scourged before his crucifixion. This was one of the pivotal events which led to Teresa changing from a rather slack observance of the Carmelite rule to a new expression for which she is now renowned. Pivotal moments are not unknown and feature quite highly in our discipleship at this moment. It might feel to some as if the part of the body to which we belong is being scourged and it is painful to both witness it and clearly to experience it. And my prayer for us at this time echoes the words of Teresa that we might understand the value.

Here the notion of abiding might be helpful. From an old English root it can mean an intensive time of waiting... Lord, thy word abideth... It can also mean something that

**Teresa was truly a child
nurtured in an atmosphere
of change and challenge**

has to be tolerated or accepted or submitted to or complied with... I can't abide it!

But of course it also has, and I believe that this is what is intended in John 15, the notion of remaining and continuing in faithfulness and expectation. That by the power of the spirit we might receive afresh the grace to know that we are one... With the Father... And all who have a similar vocation. Of all Christian traditions ours is the one that must understand the prime call to this unity with God and in, with and through him all his people. It begins in our unity with him and the ways we have at our fingertips to deepen this union must feature more and more in our devotion at this time. We must engage in our devotions in ways which emphasize our unbreakable unity with the Father. Some of the symbolic signs of this are fracturing and may come to breaking point but that does not alter the reality of our unity – it does, however, make it more important that we bear witness to it! Brothers and sisters, return to the Scriptures, to a profound engagement with their words that the word of God might be alive and active in, with and through you. Meditate upon these treasures that you might be drawn deeper into the mystery of the love of the Father. It is by a ready willingness to encounter this mystery that the seeds of the fruits of the kingdom are planted in the soil of our daily lives.

Discipleship

The seeds thus planted are nurtured and watered by our constant engagement with the ordinariness of our daily living when the fruits of our engagement with the living Word can flower in the service of his people. Like Teresa's brothers and

**the deeper and more
profound that unity becomes,
the more fruit we can bear**

sisters we need to show off our feet! As Isaiah tells us, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. The fruit of our reflection and meditation and engagement is indeed our discipleship and that discipleship has to be lived out in the nettles and the brambles and the pots and the pans of the workaday world in which we are set. For too long discipleship has been seen as preparation for engagement with the world. We above all people should be those who can engage with the poor and the downtrodden, the marginalized and the oppressed, the rejected and the discarded, and to be honest the distractions in recent years have got in the way. It might just be the time with Teresa to tighten up our rule. We must bear witness to the truth as we understand it and take courage and heart from the example of Ignatius of Antioch who exemplified the notion of becoming a disciple of Jesus when, on the road to martyrdom, he exclaimed, 'Now I am beginning to be a disciple.'

Our common prayer

Teresa took the baggage of a world not too dissimilar to our own into the heart of her engagement with the Lord. Tomorrow we can do the same, taking all the baggage of change and challenge, revolution and revolt, division and destruction to the heart of the mystery. Coming away from that mysterious encounter with the one who is both the origin and the destiny of our unity and filled with his very life, could our common prayer possibly be that we might be one, that the Church of England might be one, that the Church of God might be one so that each of us can be fruitful and rejoice in our discipleship? **ND**

The Right Rite

A Priest from the Northern Province reflects on the Bishop of London's Ad Clerum

Some readers of *NEW DIRECTIONS* may be feeling a little disappointed – if not infuriated – to read the Bishop's Pastoral Letter on the Eucharistic Life of the Church in London in which, as a response to the new translation of the Roman Missal which the majority of Roman Rite parishes in the Church of England are using with great success, he writes that 'for those who remain [as opposed to joining the Ordinariate] there can be no logic in the claim to be offering the Eucharist in communion with the Roman Church which the adoption of the new rites would imply. In these rites there is not only a prayer for the Pope but the expression of a communion with him; a communion Pope Benedict XVI would certainly repudiate.'

There can be little doubt that Anglo-Catholicism has at times attracted a small minority of fantasists and Roman Catholic-*manques*. There can equally be little doubt that few of them are left. Those of us that do remain use the Roman Rite not out of a desire to perpetuate a fantasy but as an expression of our desire for the Unity for which Jesus Christ longed. The Bishop urges our parishes not to 'create further disunity by adopting the new rites.' Readers may be forgiven for thinking that on the list of things currently threatening

disunity in the Church of England, the adoption of Eucharistic services used by the majority of Western Catholic Christians would be a long way down the list.

The Bishop writes that those parishes which adopt the new rites 'are making a clear statement of their disassociation not only from the Church of England but from the Roman Communion as well. This is a pastoral unkindness to the laity and a serious canonical matter.' Readers may be forgiven for finding the Bishop's logic a little hard to follow, and his concern for the laity a little patronizing. I have yet to encounter a pastoral visit or Home Communion which has been hampered by the new requirement to respond 'And with your Spirit.'

Readers may also be forgiven for wondering what precisely is the point of all this, given the Bishop's statement that 'there will be no persecution and no creation of ritual martyrs.' Why bother, then, except to give succour to those who have long opposed Roman Rite parishes and everything they stand for? Readers may finally be forgiven for recalling the sketch from *Beyond the Fringe*, in which an upper-class officer approaches a soldier and tells him: 'We need a pointless sacrifice, and I think you're just the man.'

Looking for a new home?

Bishop Roald Flemestad encourages us to consider the Union of Scranton as a possible solution if opponents of the women bishops legislation are not given proper provision

What do you do when the ground slips under your feet and your life's work crumbles away before your eyes? The appointment of a lady bishop back in 1993 confronted the high church movement in the Church of Norway with just this predicament. The sacramental structure of the Church was irreparably gone! In this situation one must look in two directions and ask: First, can I bear the costs of breaking up? Particularly for clergy with families, irresponsible action was and is ill-advised. The next question is: Where to go?

In the second part of the Nineties these issues posed unpleasant challenges to laity and clergy in the Norwegian Church Union. In the end some stayed in the Church of Norway, while others went to Rome and yet others formed the Nordic Catholic Church. Ten years later I am the Bishop of the Nordic Catholic Church and I would like to present this alternative to you in case the game is up also in the Church of England after the meetings of the General Synod in 2012.

Negotiations with PNCC

If looking for a new ecclesial home, most of us abhor the idea of creating a new church. Moreover, moving to a new place becomes easier if one can bring along the old furniture. These two conditions were responsibly met in our negotiations with the Polish National Catholic Church (PNCC). In our initial talks in 1999, we as former members of the Church of Norway were allowed to bring with us 'our Lutheran heritage to the extent that it has embraced and transmitted the faith of the Undivided Church.'

Having thus secured some basic elements of our patrimony, we committed ourselves to the doctrines of the seven Ecumenical Councils and other essential aspects of the Undivided Church. In short, we metaphorically took our furniture with

us into a new home built on Catholic foundations. Looking back, this arrangement has served us and the PNCC well. Ecumenically important is that the validity of our ministry and sacraments is recognized by the Roman Catholic Church.

However, at the turn of the millenium within the Union of Utrecht took a sad twist. A new



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generation of Old Catholic bishops – many of them converts from the Roman Catholic Church – introduced a modernizing agenda embracing the ordination and consecration of women to Holy Orders and solemnizing of same-sex relationships.

As the PNCC opposed these developments, she was expelled from the Union of Utrecht in 2003. Thus left alone as the only Old Catholic Church still to hold the Declaration of Utrecht as a normative document of faith, the PNCC began to prepare an alternative ecclesial structure.

Eucharistic ecclesiology

In 2008 the PNCC bishops unanimously signed the doctrinal basis for the so-called Union of Scranton. As a standard for future agreements with church bodies who wish to unite with the PNCC, this document restates the principles of the Declaration of Utrecht, adding a rejection of women clergy and the blessing of same-sex unions.

The document designates the new union as based upon a so-called

eucharistic ecclesiology. Each member church is understood as a communion of people gathered around a bishop in apostolic succession as its centre of unity. Doctrinally bound to the faith of the Undivided Church of the first millennium, each local church is seen as a complete church that carries out its tasks autonomously

in that given place. On this basis, there can be unity in diversity. Communion among the member churches does not require from each church in the union the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion or liturgical practice characteristic of the PNCC, but it implies that each church believes the other churches to hold the essentials of the Catholic faith.

Constructive work

The Nordic Catholic Church was the first to join in the Union of Scranton. Presently we have five parishes in Norway and a developing community in Stockholm, Sweden. Moreover, work is being initiated in Germany and elsewhere.

Our activities outside Scandinavia take place in cooperation with the PNCC within the framework of the Union of Scranton. Hopefully, my intention in presenting our work to readers of *NEW DIRECTIONS* is plain to see. If Anglo-Catholics are not given a proper place in the Church of England, we invite you to consider the Union of Scranton as a way out of your predicament.

It is a waste of time to lament things that have been irretrievably lost. It may take some hard effort to build a new home, but good constructive work keeps one happy. Moreover, the Christian promise gives us hope and the strength to live with imperfection. **ND**