

# newdirections



December 2013  
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serving Catholics and Evangelicals seeking to renew the Church in the historic faith

## Untying the knot

Paul Benfield examines  
the latest women bishops proposals

### *Also in this issue:*

- Reports from the National Assembly
- News from Sweden
- Books of the year



# 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. Canon John Herve ssc - 0121 449 2790

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

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

**BOSTON LINCOLNSHIRE** **St Nicholas**, Skirbeck Boston's oldest Parish Church. *Forward in Faith* Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: Low Mass 8am (1st and 3rd), Sung Mass 9.30am. Daily Mass, offices, benediction and confessions as displayed on notice boards. Rector: Fr Paul Noble ssc 01205 362734 [www.forwardinfaithlincs.org.uk/stnicholasboston.html](http://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 (not Aug) 3pm Nov-Mar. Tues: 10.30am Low Mass, Fri 8am Low Mass. Parish Priest Fr Adrian Pearce SSC 01202 911569; Parish office 01202 766772. Email: [stambrosechurch@btinternet.com](mailto:stambrosechurch@btinternet.com)

**BOURNEMOUTH** **St Francis of Assisi**, Charminster Road (corner of East Way) *A Forward in Faith* Parish under the care of the Bishop of Richborough. *Resolutions ABC*. Sunday: 8am Low Mass, Parish Mass 10am, Evening Service 6.30pm - first Sunday of each month. Parish Priest: Fr David Wastie [www.stfrancis-bournemouth.org.uk](http://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](http://www.stchads.dial.pipex.com)

**BRIDPORT** **St Swithun** *Resolutions ABC*. Sunday: Low Mass 8am; Sung Mass 9.30am, Evening Prayer and Benediction second Sunday 6pm. Weekday Masses: Tues 12 noon, Thur 10am. During interregnum please contact the Revd Duncan Wilson on 01308 420651

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

**BRISTOL** **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](http://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**, Fumham. *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](http://www.churchofthegoodshepherd-chard.weebly.com)



NORTH YORK MOORS: St Helen, Carlin How

**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: Sung Mass 10am. Weekday Masses: Mon 6pm, Tues 10am, Thur 7pm, Holy Days 7.30pm. Check website for other daily services [www.stbarnabasoldheath.wordpress.com](http://www.stbarnabasoldheath.wordpress.com) Vicar: Fr Richard Tillbrook ssc 01206 797481 [fathercap@hotmail.com](mailto:fathercap@hotmail.com)

**DEVIZES** **St Peter's**, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire *A Forward in Faith* Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Ebbw Vale. All *resolutions passed*. Sunday: 8am Low Mass (BCP), Fourth Sunday only: 10am Sung Mass, Thurs 7pm Low Mass. Mass on major festivals and 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](http://www.stsaviourseastbourne.org.uk)

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

**GRIMSBY** **St Augustine**, Legsby Avenue Lovely Grade II Church by Sir Charles Nicholson. *A Forward in Faith* Parish under Bishop of

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

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

**HEMPTON** **Holy Trinity** (near Fakenham, Norfolk). ABC, FF. The Church on the Green. Visit us on the way to Walsingham. Mass on Sundays and Wednesdays at 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.stlukekingston.co.uk](http://www.stlukekingston.co.uk)

**LEAMINGTON SPA** **St John the Baptist** Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Ebbw Vale - 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](http://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](http://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](http://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**, Windmore Hill. *A Forward in Faith*, *Resolution A,B & C*, modern catholic parish. Sunday: Every Sunday: Said Mass 9.00am and Sung Mass 10.30am with Junior Church. Weekdays: Tues to Fri 12 noon Angelus and Mass. Saturday Mass 10am. For the Sacrament of Reconciliation and other enquires contact Fr Richard Bolton at [rdeb2010@btinternet.com](mailto:rdeb2010@btinternet.com) or phone 0208 364 1583

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

**LONDON SE13** **St Stephen**, Lewisham (opposite Lewisham Station) *A Forward in Faith* Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham. Sunday: Mass 8am, Parish Mass 10am. Weekdays: Mon 10am, Tues 6.30pm, Wed 12.15pm, Fri 6.30pm, Sat 10am Parish Priest: Fr Peter Hudson 07908 640369

**LONDON SE16** **St Mary Rotherhithe**, St Marychurch Street SE16 4JE *A Fulham* Parish. Sunday: Solemn Mass 10am, Evening Prayer 6pm, Benediction monthly. Mass times: Tues 12 noon; Wed 10am School Mass; Thur 6pm; Fri 9.30am; Sat 9.30am. Tube: Jubilee Line Bermondsey/Canada Water/Rotherhithe Overground. Visitors most welcome. Fr Mark Nicholls ssc 0207 394 3394 [www.stmaryrotherhithe.org](http://www.stmaryrotherhithe.org)

**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

# Untying the knot

**Paul Benfield** explains the latest proposed legislation on Women in the Episcopate

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**T**he Report from the Steering Committee for the Draft legislation on Women in the Episcopate was published on 25 October 2013. It was an unusual committee in that of its fifteen members, five had voted against the final approval of the last legislation in November 2012. It had been set up in this way, at the suggestion of the Bishop of Willesden, to see if a small group could reach agreement on a way forward to allow the consecration of women as bishops in the Church of England, but also to provide space for those who could not accept them. Thirteen of the members commended the committee's proposals to General Synod as 'the best way forward for the Church of England in its ministry and mission and a possibility of securing an early resolution of this unfinished business,' while two members, of which I was one, abstained.

The task of the Steering Committee was not to consider whether women should become bishops nor, 'given the decision taken by Synod in July, how extensive the legislation should be, but rather how best, given the decisions already reached, we might move forward together in a way that maintains the breadth and rich diversity of the Church of England.' In what follows I have tried to give a factual account of the proposals, without comment, drawing wherever possible on the exact wording of the relevant documents.

### Guiding Principles

The proposals are based on five guiding principles which were first commended by the House of Bishops in May 2013 and which were published in the October 2013 edition of New Directions under the heading 'The Five Propositions' by which they were then known. These five guiding principles 'must be read one with the other and held in tension, rather than being applied selectively.' So, for example, whilst they say that those whom the Church of England has 'duly ordained and appointed to office are the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve respect and canonical obedience,' they go on to say that 'since those within the Church of England, who on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures.'

Again, though: 'Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter [of women bishops]' nevertheless, 'Pastoral and Sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.'

### Package of Proposals

The proposals form a package of four documents which must be read together. If one takes any one of the documents on its own one gets a distorted and unbalanced view of the package. The documents are a Draft Measure, a Draft Amending Canon, a Draft House of Bishops Declaration and Draft Regulations for Resolution of Disputes Procedure. The Report makes it clear that all four are part of an overall balanced package and that the Declaration and Disputes Resolution Procedure need to be agreed before the Measure and Canon are brought to final approval.

### Measure

The draft measure is relatively simple and straightforward. It repeals the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993 in its entirety and makes it lawful for the General Synod to make provision by canon for the ordination of women and men to the office of bishop and priest.

### Amending Canon

The draft canon confers the authority to consecrate women as bishops and continues the authority to allow women to be consecrated as priests. It revokes the canons which made special provisions for the ordination of women as deacons and priests. Henceforth there will be no distinction in the canons concerning ordination between men and women.

The canon also requires the House of Bishops to make regulations prescribing a procedure for resolutions of disputes arising from the arrangements contained in the House of Bishops' Declaration. Any changes to those regulations once made by the House of Bishops must be agreed by a two thirds majority of each House of the General Synod.



## House of Bishops' Declaration

The Declaration sets out the five guiding principles referred to above and goes on to say that the outworking of these principles needs to be accompanied by simplicity, reciprocity and mutuality.

The arrangements for parishes are that a PCC may pass a motion requesting arrangements to be made in accordance with the Declaration. There are procedural requirements for the passing of a resolution which mean that normally there must be four weeks' notice of the meeting and the meeting must be attended by two-thirds of the members or the motion must be passed by a majority of the members entitled to be present. The recommended form of motion is: 'This PCC requests, on grounds of theological conviction, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests' Resolutions may be rescinded at any time.

Where a resolution has been passed, and before clergy are appointed to the parish or a bishop chosen by the diocesan bishop to provide oversight, there will need to be consultation between bishop and parish to ascertain the nature of the theological conviction because that conviction will vary according to the tradition of the parish concerned. The House of Bishops will provide guidance for bishops and parishes to help facilitate those conversations.

Where there is any difficulty between a patron and a parish which has passed a resolution (such as a patron wishing to present a woman priest to the benefice when this would not be acceptable to the parish) the diocesan bishop must 'do all in his or her power to achieve and outcome that respects the declared view of the parish and protects the parish representatives from having to resort to their own power of veto under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986'.

The choice of a bishop to undertake ministry in respect of a parish which has passed a resolution is for the relevant diocesan bishop to make with a view to avoiding conflict with the theological conviction underlying the parish resolution. The choice should be made from among the male bishops who are members of the diocesan synod of that or another diocese of the Church of England. In other words the bishop must be a serving bishop and not retired. In all cases the diocesan bishop should seek to ensure that pastoral and sacramental ministry is provided in accordance with the five guiding principles.

The House of Bishops affirms in the Declaration the importance of there continuing to be consecrations of bishops within the Church of England to enable such ministry to be provided and the fact that the sees of Ebbsfleet, Richborough and Beverley will remain in existence will provide one of a range of means by which the Archbishops will ensure that a suitable supply of bishops continues. The House also accepts that the presence in the College of Bishops of at least one bishop who takes the Conservative Evangelical view on headship is important for sustaining the necessary climate of trust.

The Declaration states that since the cathedral is the seat of the bishop the House does not believe that arrangements for parishes can apply to cathedrals, even in the case of parish church cathedrals. However, it goes on to say that gender or theological conviction in relation to the ordained ministry of women should not be an obstacle to appointment as dean

or cathedral canon.

The House undertakes that should it be minded to propose changes to the Declaration 'it will consult the General Synod and will not proceed with its proposals unless they command two-thirds majorities in all three Houses.'

## Resolution of Disputes Regulations

These regulations would be made by the House of Bishops under canon. Under them the Archbishops must appoint an Independent Reviewer with the concurrence of the Chairs of the Houses of Clergy and Laity. In discharging his or her functions the Independent Reviewer must act impartially and fairly and must have regard to the 'five guiding principles' referred to in the House of Bishops' Declaration.

PCCs may bring a grievance in respect of any action taken or failure to act in accordance with that part of the House of Bishops Declaration concerning parishes. The grievance may be against any archbishop, bishop, archdeacon, rural dean or minister having the cure of souls. The reviewer must normally complete the review within two months. The procedure is very flexible and may include an oral hearing and the appointment of one or more experts to assist the reviewer. On the conclusion of the review the reviewer will issue a decision, which may include recommendations, and this decision must be published unless the reviewer considers that there are good reasons for not doing so.

In addition to grievances brought by PCCs, any person may raise a concern with the Independent Reviewer in relation to any aspect of the operation of the House of Bishops' Declaration. Any such concern may relate to more than one act or omission under the House of Bishops' Declaration and to more than one parish or diocese. Following the raising of such a concern the Reviewer may undertake an inquiry.

The Independent Reviewer must provide an annual report, which must be published.

The Steering Committee Report, in explaining the Independent Review process states:

'Like other ombudsmen, the Independent Reviewer would have no powers to impose penalties as a result of his or her findings. But the ability to publish reports critical of actions taken would in practice have a significant impact. Whether the fact that a cleric was found by the Independent Reviewer to have acted inconsistently with the House of Bishops' Declaration might form the basis for a complaint under the Clergy Discipline Measure is uncertain and would depend on future decisions of courts and tribunals under the Measure.'

## Conclusion

The members of the Steering Committee all agreed that 'the balanced package of Draft Measure, Amending Canon, House of Bishops' Declaration and Disputes Resolution Procedure that, together, we have produced gives full and effective expression to the motion [passed by Synod in July]'. We ventured to suggest that when the package of proposals comes to be debated by Synod in November 'this debate might be an occasion when the Synod might be prepared to focus more on how to nurture the degree of consensus that has started to emerge rather than having a series of detailed and potentially divisive debates on amendments.' **ND**



# News from Sweden

As the first woman Archbishop of Uppsala is elected,  
**Sister Gerd** reports on the grave situation facing the Church in Sweden

**O**n 15th October the Church of Sweden elected its first woman archbishop: Antje Jackelén, currently the second woman Bishop of Lund, received 55.9% of the votes. She will be 'received' on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2014, Archbishop Anders Wejryd having 'laid down his staff' and retired at Vespers the previous day.

## Inevitable consequence

Antje Jackelén, 58, born and bred in Germany, was ordained to the priesthood in 1980. In 2007 she succeeded Christina Odenberg, who in 1997 became the first woman bishop in Sweden. Currently, three of the thirteen dioceses in the Church of Sweden have women bishops. With a number of retirements expected in the next few years, that figure is likely to rise.

Ever since the trial election in early September, designed to tease out five candidates, it was pretty clear that Antje Jackelén would win. Some say it was obvious long before, and only the inevitable consequence of the decision by the then Church Assembly jointly with *Riksdagen*, the Swedish parliament, back in 1958 to permit the ordination of women to the priesthood.

## Apostolic succession

For traditionalists, who have all along been increasingly side-tracked and silenced, this is certainly the most serious effect of that decision: The archbishop of Uppsala consecrates all new bishops, who in turn ordain priests and deacons. From June 2014 onwards, there can no longer be any proper and trustworthy ordinations, since they will all be derived from her. At the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation, the Church of Sweden managed to preserve its apostolic succession in the same way as the Church of England. That will now come to an end, and once the current generation of priests and deacons ordained within that succession, understood in its historical and biological reality, has passed away, apostolic ministry will no longer be available. We are grateful indeed to have a number of young priests in ministry at the moment, but the future is bleak.

## Mythological language

Since in the Church of Sweden, priests are not licensed by the bishop, and confirmation is administered by priests, it is fairly easy for traditionalists to avoid liturgical contact with a diocesan bishop, but a woman archbishop is something different. Predictably, with the demise of apostolic ministry, the floodgates to the slippery slope of heterodox teaching and sacramental uncertainty are opened wide: Theology is a matter of mythology and metaphor, and truth is relative

and private. At the public hearing prior to the election Mrs Jackelén explained: 'If you take the Virgin birth as a biological issue, you have actually missed the whole point. Virgin birth is mythological language.'

## Resignation and protest

Besides traditionalists, a number of people, including quite a few women priests, have raised rather more than their eyebrows. A leading Professor Emerita of Sociology of Religion has laid down her orders and left the Church of Sweden in protest. A leading politician, who describes himself as a non-believer but interested in religion and life issues, concludes that: 'A God who holds up a finger to see from where the wind is blowing is not much of a God. A

church that does the same is not much of a church. If the views of a church have been through the grinder that only turns out what is politically correct and 'modern,' it feels just like any other association. That might have some value, but it has probably nothing to do with God.'

Given the opportunity to explain herself in the Church Weekly, Mrs Jackelén assures us: 'I willingly profess my faith in the words of the Apostolic and the Nicene Creeds. But as a theologian and bishop, it is my task to take people's questions seriously.'

For me, that means to bring out as much as possible of the treasure of theological knowledge that is available in the Christian tradition. [...] It is not the Virgin birth that lets us understand that Jesus Christ is the Second Person in the Trinity. The theological pedagogy is the opposite: the experience of Jesus Christ as the Risen One gives meaning to faith in the Virgin birth.'

As for the (possible?) equality between Jesus and Mohammed as witnesses to the truth, Mrs Jackelén suggests there is no distinction between ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue, and Christianity might not have any greater claim to truth than any other religion. We should engage in 'good conversations,' a remarkable comment from a bishop!

## Guarding against error

Is there then an inevitable structural connection between the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate on the one hand, and such heterodoxy on the other, or is it simply fortuitous? This is of course very hard to prove beyond reasonable doubt.

There are certainly some women priests, not least in Sweden, who profess rather more orthodox views, and who are just as upset by these shenanigans as their traditionalist colleagues. But, whilst we should be cautious of any hasty

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**If the sacramental structure has been altered at the very core of the institution designed to uphold and guarantee apostolic ministry, ... heterodoxy and disunity will indeed be the inevitable consequences**

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conclusions about other people's faith, it is nevertheless the duty of bishops and archbishops to guard the teaching of the church against error. That's the sticking point: within catholic, apostolic tradition, bishops and archbishops in particular are charged with the duty to expound the truth and to guard against error, thus ensuring sacramental assurance among the faithful and, we believe, graced with the ability to do so. Sacramental assurance is rooted in the historical and biological reality of the church within this world as we know it, and have known it for just over two millennia.

### Guarantee

If sacramental assurance cannot be found in the bishop or priest, how can (s)he possibly guard against error or provide any sacraments that we can trust? If the sacramental structure has been altered at the very core of the institution designed to uphold and guarantee apostolic ministry, does that not suggest that heterodoxy and disunity, the other thing incumbent on bishops to guard against, will indeed be the inevitable consequences? Is this not the very source of what is sometimes called 'interior secularization' i.e. a process initiated from within the church itself, which is gaining more and more ground?

### Structural change and consequence

It seems clear that a structural change at the heart of the ordained ministry will inevitably lead to structural consequences far beyond our comprehension and ability to repair. Our gender is part of that humanity which God wants to save, and which God has chosen to use sacramentally in order to do so.

Sacramental reality is a God-given gift and not something that we can or should change; if we do, we undermine ourselves at our peril, since we will no longer have any secure foundation for our faith and trust, but only the fanciful abstractions of mythology, metaphor, political expediency and the current whims of whoever attracts the majority vote.

Then of course the priest can be a woman, the bread a rice-cracker and the wine blackcurrant juice, and how about some bubbly in the font. The Church of Sweden is, sadly, a prime example.

### Pressures for equality

How did it come to this? During the 1950s the pressures for the equality and right of women to be ordained to the priesthood were increasing as a matter of justice. The Church of Sweden was still the established national church, and church legislation was shared between the then Church Assembly and *Riksdagen* (Parliament).

The Social Democrat Party, which was in government, had made sure that *Riksdagen* had passed legislation to enable the ordination of women to the priesthood when, to their dismay, the Church Assembly turned it down at its 1957 session.

The election of a new Church Assembly was arranged and a new session was called the following year. Conveniently, the then Archbishop Yngve Brilioth was seriously ill and died. That enabled the election of an archbishop in favour, Gunnar Hultgren. Thus the 1958 Church Assembly voted

in favour and the ordination of the first women priests could go ahead in 1960. A so-called conscience clause for objectors was in place for about 25 years but was then removed.

### Securing the future

Various attempts have been made at securing the future for traditionalists, including suggestions that something like the PEVs might be put in place but, since there are no suffragans or assistant bishops in Sweden, this has constantly been denied as an alien institution.

Following a successful motion to the Church Assembly, the Governing Board arranged for talks to be held in small groups with participants from both sides of the argument in all dioceses during the 1990s, and some suggestions were put forward which might have improved matters. However, in the face of very vocal opposition, the then Archbishop did not have the courage of his convictions to allow any improvements for traditionalists.


As a result, any candidate for ordination, and any priest seeking preferment, is required to sign a declaration of his willingness to serve in all capacities, including at the altar, with all other priests, i.e. including women, and be seen to do so. At one stage it was even said that a priest can of course believe anything he likes, as long as he is seen to tow the line, i.e. to follow 'the faith of the church.' An employee must carry out his employer's instructions, and no priest opposed to the ordination of women should become the vicar of a parish, since he is not 'fit' to manage female staff.

Various ways around these instructions, which are still in place, have been sought and some men have been ordained or appointed in spite of them, usually depending on the bishop's discretion in these matters.

### Formal separation

Up until 1 January 2000, when Church and State were formally separated, all senior appointments, including bishops, were made by the government. Of the three names presented, the first was not always chosen, especially if he was known not to favour the ordination of women. With the separation of Church and State, the intention was to 'set the church free from political influence,' but alas, the opposite has been the case.

According to the current Church Order, all elections are 'direct' at all levels of church government, i.e. to what is now called the General Synod, the Diocesan Chapters and the PCCs. That way, a 'nomination group,' which can be anything from a political party to a church group who can afford the cost, can put forward a candidate to any of these bodies and no candidate can be linked 'backwards' to any worshipping congregation. Episcopal appointments are made by election. Priests and deacons are employed by the PCC.

The latest idea is to amalgamate all parishes within any town or city or suitable rural districts into mega-parishes to be managed by a vicar and a PCC that will control the money. In Malmö, for example, the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city in Sweden with a population of about 80 000, the two deaneries and about 25 parishes will become one parish and one PCC on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014. Pastoral relationships between priests and their people will inevitably be broken. Structural changes have organisational consequences as well. 



# National Assembly 2013

## In Other Business...

The **Director** reports on the 2013 National Assembly

Comments received since the National Assembly indicate that the change to holding it on a single day at St Alban the Martyr, Holborn, was widely welcomed, though correct use of the sound system and arrangements for those who are hard of hearing will need further attention if, as is hoped, the Assembly is held at St Alban's again next year. We are grateful to the Vicar and his colleagues, and all who helped to make it such a successful day.

Some of the proceedings are covered elsewhere in this issue. Photographs, audio files, texts of some of the addresses and a transcript of the Women Bishops debate are available on the website.

### Maintaining recruitment efforts

In my report I highlighted the need to maintain our efforts to recruit new members. Between 1 April and mid-October we lost 96 members: 54 through death and 42 by resignation or ceasing payment, a significant proportion of those because of age, illness or infirmity. 79 new members were recruited in the same period, so the net loss was 17.

The good news is that 27 of the new members joined since 1 September, resulting in a net gain of 5 in those six weeks. But there is a great deal more to be done in order to stop the decline and begin to grow our membership again. If every member recruited just one new member, we'd have more members than we've ever had before, we'd be able to fund our core work from our membership, and we could spend legacies, which we still want to encourage, on what they should be spent on: one-off expenditure, special projects, mission and growth.

### Constitutional Change

The Assembly approved a significant change to the Constitution. At present the Council is the Trustee body for the Charity, but with up to 50 members, currently 37, it is far too large to exercise its Trustee responsibilities properly. With effect from 1 January, an expanded Executive Committee will become the Trustee body. It will consist of the three Officers elected by the Assembly, to be known in future as Chairman, Lay Vice-Chairman and Clerical Vice-Chairman; three members elected by the Council; and the Treasurer and up to three further members, chosen for their expertise with the Council's approval. Other minor and consequential amendments were also made.

### Retirements

The Chairman thanked the following regional deans, who have retired this year, for their work: Fr Alan Cross, Fr Tony Delves, Fr Alan Jones, Fr Gareth Jones, Fr Martyn Neale, Fr Reginald Stretton. The Bishops would be discussing the job specification for regional deans, and their roles in relation to Forward in Faith and the Society, at their meeting in November, after which the relevant bishops would be making new appointments, after consultation with the clergy.

The Chairman also thanked the Director's Assistant, Colin Niblett, for holding the fort in the first three months

of the year, after Stephen Parkinson's retirement. He thanked Fr Ian Brooks for editing *Forward Plus!* since it began in 1997, almost 60 issues, and Cyril Wood for his work as Treasurer of Forward in Faith since its inception 20 years ago.

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**If every member recruited just one new member, we'd have more members than we've ever had before, we'd be able to spend legacies on what they should be spent on: special projects, mission and growth**

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### New ventures

Fr Christopher Smith, Chairman of the Church Union, reported to the Assembly on the plans for the new newspaper, to be known as *Together – The Catholic Voice in the Church of England*, which he will be editing. It will be published quarterly from Lent 2014 as a joint venture by the leading catholic societies, in place of *Forward Plus!*

The Secretary, Fr Ross Northing, announced that the 2014 National Assembly will be held on Saturday 15 November.

### Appointments

Mrs Mary Nagel (Chichester Diocese) was elected to fill the vacancy for a lay representative of the Richborough constituency, which comprises those dioceses, other than London, Southwark and Rochester, for which the Bishop of Richborough is the PEV, whether or not he is the bishop for the C parishes in those dioceses.

After the Assembly, the Council met briefly. The following were co-opted as members of the Council for the coming year: Fr Paul Benfield (Legal), Preb. John Brownsell (Vocations), Mrs Sandra Fowles (Scotland), Mr Daniel Howard (Ordinands), Bishop Tony Robinson (Chairman of the Council of Bishops of the Society), Fr Christopher Smith (Chairman of the Church Union), Fr Nicholas Spicer (Provincial Master of the Society of the Holy Cross). The Council also appointed Mr Jonathan Prichard (a former Diocesan Secretary of the Diocese of Chichester) as Treasurer of Forward in Faith for the next four years. **ND**



# Forward Together

The Bishop of Fulham addresses the National Assembly about our future

**W**e meet, as we must, as a Christian assembly, modelling something, we hope, of the true ecclesial characteristic of synodality: a taking counsel together, a walking together, bishops, priests and people, in the way of discipleship, the way of Cross and Resurrection, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We seek all of us to be formed by, and to reflect back to others, the theological virtues of faith, hope and love, those crowning gifts of the Holy Spirit of which we have spoken and sung in this morning's liturgy; and so we live out our baptismal vocation to be salt and light in the world. As we heard in the homily, as one very small part of the Church of God, the people of God gathered here this morning, we cannot but be conscious of the face of Christ in our suffering brothers and sisters, not least in Syria, in Egypt, and in so many regions of the lands of Our Lord's birth and ministry, and the lands of the earliest spread of the primitive Church. Our consciousness of this truly universal, truly world-wide Church, and our consciousness of the suffering Church, can only help to keep our gaze long and our horizons wide, and these things must continue to characterize an organization which continues to stand under the strap-line, the banner, of the quest for unity and truth. All of this teaches us humility: humility which is learnt from the Church of the Ages, humility which is learnt from the example of the persecuted Church. From humility flows thanksgiving, for our own small part in the task entrusted to us: that of not only guarding the deposit, but handing on, handing over, as St Paul has it, that which we have received. That is our mandate, our *mandatum*, our new commandment; that is our agenda for mission.

## Hurt and healing

So: a new Pope, a new Archbishop, yes, even a new Director of Forward in Faith. What a difference a year makes. In the body politic of the Church of England, and over that question

of holy order which exercises us so much, we might say that everything has changed and nothing has changed. A year ago we met a matter of weeks before a historic debate in the General Synod on Final Approval of draft legislation to allow the consecration of women to the episcopate. As we know, that vote for Final Approval was lost: lost by a handful of votes (in terms of the required synodical majorities) in the House of Laity, but lost because the middle ground of that House – representing very faithfully, I believe, the middle ground of the Church of England – could not see the ground being laid for the flourishing of the

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## It is truly love for the Lord which inspires us, and love for his Church and for his people

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*whole* Church of England, in what was then proposed. Many of us here this morning, and many more of those we represent who are not in this church now, were put in a deeply discomfiting and even stressful position after last November's decision in General Synod: a position misrepresented in some quarters of the press at least and taken up by many of those who think differently from ourselves. The story went something like this: the legislation had been brought down by those who were anti-women, those who had deliberately wrecked the credibility of the Church of England, those who are simply obstructive and reactionary. Well, we know very well that none of this was or is true: but it was said, and it hurt. It hurt many of our number. So let us not be afraid to bring that hurt to the foot of the Cross, and to ask for God's healing.

## Opportunity and hope

So: nothing has changed; here we are in a Church of England which, on paper, is just as it was on this question on 12 November 1992, the year before



my ordination to the diaconate, that's how long we have been living with this issue. But of course we know that in another sense everything has changed. The Church of England has quickly embarked on a fresh process, and it is likely that we will be back at the Final Approval stage of legislation, just as we were last November, within the next couple of years. Others will speak later this afternoon in much more detail, and with a much more informed perspective than mine, about this fresh process, and you as an Assembly will have the chance to make your voices heard in the debate which we shall hold. What I want to say now is this: I believe that it is hugely important for us to grasp that, in one key sense, everything has changed, and changed in a way which, extraordinary as it is to say so, can and must give us hope; hope that creates real opportunity for us under God, if only, under God, we can rise to the challenge.

## Commitment and flourishing

The change is this, and it is embedded, if you want to look at documents, in that report that the latest Working Party on fresh legislative proposals brought to the General Synod in July this year. There we read, by unanimous agreement of the members of that working party which, as with all these things, had among it representatives of the spectrum of views across the Church of England, that Catholics and evangelicals who are unable, on the grounds of theological conviction,

to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests, remain within the spectrum of Anglican teaching and tradition; that the Church of England will be committed to their flourishing within its life and structures (a very important phrase, that, of which we'll hear a great deal more later today); and that provision for them, for us, will be made without limit of time. Now it's easy to say – words, promises, empty promises perhaps – and trust me, we will be watching like hawks to see that the promises, the commitments, contained in those words are honoured! But those words, those commitments, those promises, do potentially create the space for us in which we can go forward; yes, forward in faith.

### Assurance and determination

I have said already that others will have much more to say later today on the detail. I just want to make two points. The first is brief, and it is this. It is a huge tribute to all those, including our many friends who are now in another and larger part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church; it is a huge tribute to all, who over twenty years and more have continued to present and to argue our case with clarity and courtesy, to put across our arguments over reception, over the limits of authority and the nature of development, over the relationship between Scripture and Tradition, over questions of assurance and symbolism in the sacramental economy; it is a huge tribute to them and to all that work that our theological position is being recognized by those who are charting the way ahead for the Church of England. We are determined to keep that work fresh and in the collective mind of the Church, and there are plans in train for a new project in this regard, of which more another day.

### Building the Kingdom

The second and even more substantial point is this. If, and I repeat it's an 'if', for we do not know the detail, if the Church of England really does mean what it says, that we are to be given the space, the tools, the means whereby we can flourish, then we had better grasp every opportunity to occupy that space, to grow the Church, to win souls for Christ, to

serve the people of this nation, and to build the Kingdom of God.

### Unity of Purpose

This is where the growing relationship between Forward in Faith and the Society, and its bishops, is really beginning to build. A much greater sense of collegiality and co-operation among the bishop, diocesan and suffragan, PEV or those with a traditional geographically bounded ministry; a more strategic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the catholic movement, of our parishes, clergy and resources – human, built, and of course financial; a much greater unity of purpose beginning to show among the catholic societies and their various bodies of governance and trusteeship; a real sense of asking ourselves where we can pool our collective resources to

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**everything has changed,  
and changed in a way which  
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reap the greatest harvest in terms of mission and evangelization; a zeal for evangelization in the hugely challenging multiple contexts of Britain in 2013; an absolute commitment to the highest standards of formation for our priests. I know very well, as they say in some advertisements, that 'other products are available,' but I am going to exercise my right to single out the work done by the Principal and his staff at St Stephen's House, in forming a new generation of really able and committed and creative priests. We have a wonderful opportunity through creative engagement with something the Church of England is doing, the new validation pathways through the Durham Common Awards. We have a new opportunity to participate in the evolution of a link between training in the academic discipline of theology and training which is pastoral, applied and distinctively ministerial, which will surely bear great fruit in the future. Above all, and this is where every member of this Assembly has such a key part to play, we look for a renewal of our hearts and minds in the service of the Lord; a deepening of our prayer; a greater love for Jesus Christ,


in the Blessed Sacrament, in the life of the Church, in the face of the poor.

Without all this, and much, much more, the efforts of our representatives in the political arena will be in vain, and we shall die not because of what the General Synod does, but for want of priests, for want of parishes which model beautiful and attractive Eucharistic community, which draw fresh Christians to the Lord, and for want of newly baptised women and men who are on fire with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### For the sake of the Gospel

I have – if you'll indulge me in saying this – just a little bit of experience in the heat of the political kitchen in the Church of England. I'm sure that those who this time around are standing over the pots full of boiling water and the pans spitting oil are doing – as I did and those who went before me did – all this political work for the sake of the Gospel. It might not feel like it at the time. Others might not believe that that is our motivation, but it's our job to prove them wrong. It is truly love for the Lord which inspires us, and love for his Church and for his people, and I hope that is what has inspired every one of you to come here today.

We have a mixed agenda this afternoon: some business which looks like housekeeping, but which is actually very important for the furtherance of the work of this charity and for the prosecution of our aims and objectives; some consideration of the political and synodical agenda; and what I hope will be a timely and significant presentation on the faith and life of some of our, very many, members who are women; and other bits and pieces of business besides. We shall end, as we always should, before the Lord, and perhaps after Benediction you could manage to slip away into the October night as quietly and prayerfully as possible, before continuing your conversations and your fellowship out there in the fleshpots of Holborn. Your fidelity inspires me and your Executive and your Council to serve you. May the Lord bless you, as you seek to follow Him more faithfully; and we pray that our day together will be richly blessed.

Thank you very much indeed. 



# For Unity and Truth

**Bishop Geoffrey Rowell** considers the big picture of Christian unity.

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.” (John 16.13)

**T**his year, 2013, has seen two anniversaries that, in this country at least, have barely been noticed, though that is not the case in Europe, and that means at least for a couple or so of weeks more in my diocese. The first of these is what we know as: ‘The Edict of Milan’, the decree of the emperor Constantine in 313, which transformed the situation of Christians in the Roman Empire from one of persecution to one of recognition, freedom and tolerance. The second anniversary is the one thousand, one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Sts Cyril and Methodius, the apostles of the Slavic peoples. It marks the beginning of the conversion of the Slavic peoples to the Christian faith. When I was in Slovakia in the summer, every church had a banner of Sts Cyril and Methodius, marking this moment of time when, through the preaching of these two brothers from Thessaloniki, the Gospel of Christ, and the Good News of the Kingdom, touched the hearts and minds of many, and gave a new Christian identity to many of the peoples of Eastern Europe.

## Constraining parochialism

We can, sadly, be very little Englanders here, and be locked up in our own concerns and fail to see the big picture. As the poet Francis Thompson said: ‘Tis ye, ’tis your estranged face, that miss the many-splendoured thing.’ Time and again when I have come back to the Church of England from my ministry in Europe, I have been all too conscious of a constraining parochialism; and it has been a real sadness that the debates of the General Synod all too often do not show any real awareness of the big picture, of the vitality and the reality of the life of the great churches of both east and west, with whom as Catholic Anglicans we claim, and rightly claim, to share so much in common.

We may debate, and rightly, as to whether the conversion of Constantine was an unmixed blessing; whether it ushered in an alliance between Church and state that has not always been healthy. You could say there is a direct line between Constantine and Henry VIII. There are sharp questions to be asked about what is the proper relationship between Church and state, Christianity and culture? What is the price sometimes paid for recognition by the state? There can be many Babylonian captivities of the Church. We should remember that John Keble’s Assize Sermon of 1833, which Newman saw as marking the beginning of the Oxford Movement, was triggered by Government interference with bishoprics, with the successors of the Apostles. It was in that



context that Newman asked, rightly and sharply: ‘On what ground do you stand, O presbyter of the Church of England? That is a question which we rightly have to continue asking. Do we stand, as the Church of England has claimed to do, not least in the response made to Leo XIII’s condemnation of Anglican Orders, on the historic, apostolic ministry, or

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**the eternal truth of the Gospel, the good news of salvation, is proclaimed and lived by a Church which necessarily lives within the changing scenes of life and history**

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do we stand with the spirit of the age and the cultural currents of the day? The Gospel is indeed to be proclaimed afresh in each generation, and that means addressing the questions of each generation not adapting to current cultural

norms, they have to be tested and tried by the Gospel and by the faith of the Church Catholic.

Yet the Edict of Milan is something Christians should celebrate. It opens with words which proclaim a remarkable tolerance and freedom of religion:

For a long time past we have made it our aim that freedom of worship should not be denied, but that every man, according to his own inclination and wish, should be given permission to practise his religion as he chose... [we therefore] give the Christians and all others liberty to follow whatever form of worship they chose... This therefore is the decision that we reached by sound and careful reasoning: no one whatever was to be denied the right to follow and choose the Christian observance or form of worship; and everyone was to have permission to give his mind to that form of worship which he feels to be adapted to his needs, so that the Deity might be enabled to show us in all things His customary care and generosity.

By this Edict of Milan, whose 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary we keep this year, Christians moved from a situation of persecution to one of recognition, tolerance and respect. We know that in our world of today there are many of our brothers and sisters in Christ who suffer persecution for their faith – be it in Pakistan or in Syria or many other places. As Rupert Shortt has reminded us in his fine recent book, *Christianophobia*, there is a hidden story of Christian persecution in many parts of the world that we need to know and recognise. Such persecution, whatever form it takes, springs from a

conviction that I have the truth and there is no place for any other understanding, and that can be the case whether it is the law laid down by an Inquisition, or a Calvinist decree, or political correctness.

### Rooted and grounded in Christ

In St John's Gospel, in that reading which we have just heard, Jesus promises to his Church the gift of his life-giving Spirit. The Spirit of truth 'will guide you into all truth'. What that truth is, is related to Jesus: 'He will take what is mine and declare it to you'. The truth for Christians is rooted and grounded in Christ. The Spirit guiding us into truth is not an endorsement of each and every change; it is always related to who and what Jesus is. The guidance of the Spirit is into an ever-deeper understanding of the Gospel, and ever deeper understanding of who Christ is. There is a necessary unfolding of Christian truth for the simple reason, as John Henry Newman saw, that the eternal truth of the Gospel, the good news of salvation, is proclaimed and lived by a Church which necessarily lives within the changing scenes of life and history. Every age and every culture puts its questions to the Church and to the proclamation of the Gospel. Newman saw that this meant that there would be, there must be, change in response to the different questions of different ages. But that never meant that 'anything goes', nor did it mean a simple endorsement of each and every change. As Newman put it: 'it changes always in order to remain the same.' Faithfulness to the Gospel, means faithfulness to what has been received, and standing by what has been received, though of course in new and different circumstances and situations.

### The mystery of communion

St Paul, writing to the Christians of Corinth, says: 'I handed on to you, that which I also received.' He proceeds to remind the Corinthians of the central mystery of the Eucharist, the handing-on of what had begun with Jesus himself, saying, as he broke bread and shared the cup of wine with his disciples as the danger built up around him: 'You are to do this, you are to go on doing this, in remembrance, really for a re-presenting of me.' This doing, this powerful breaking and giving and sharing, establishes communion in the midst of betrayal.

The mystery of the Eucharist is a mystery of sacrifice, of the God who freely gives himself into our fragility. In this giving we are, in the powerful words of the ARCIC statement on the Eucharist: 'drawn into the movement of his self-offering.' We, in the many nights of our betraying and being betrayed, are drawn into this mystery of communion in which over and over again we find our identity, and are remade in Christ. Our faith is in so many ways a faith of paradox, of communion established at the very heart of a betrayal which is a denial of communion; of a love which bears all things, and endures all things, when it would seem that that same love is denied. The Lord himself, as that acerbic Dane, Søren Kierkegaard, put it, 'climbed step by step downward, but still he climbed.'

### Outpouring of love

St Paul writing to the Christians of Philippi, spoke of how the One who was: 'in the form of God did not think equality with God was something to be grasped, snatched at, held on to, but he emptied himself and was made in human likeness.' Paul continues: 'he became humbler yet, even to death on a cross. Wherefore [and what a wherefore that is] God has highly exalted him, and given him a Name above all other names, that at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow.' This self-emptying, this total outpouring of love, is the very Being of the God whom we worship and adore, the love which comes down to the very lowest part of our need. This is the God who stoops to wash our feet, who submits himself to us. This is the God whose wondrous incarnation is at the heart of the Christian and catholic faith. This is the God whose transforming and transfiguring grace is at the heart of our lives. This is the God who subverts the idolatries of every culture, and who reaches beyond the manipulations and measures of every Synod, for as another great Anglican theologian, F. D. Maurice, once said: 'The Kingdom of God does not come by arrangements of our own.' Catholic Christianity witnesses to a Gospel which is beyond the pettiness and prejudices of every generation; which is a supernatural religion, transforming us by the grace and life and power of the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Christ. Tradition, for the Orthodox world, is the life of the Spirit in the Church, leading us into the truth, keeping us faithful to that which we have received, and transforming us into the likeness of Christ from one degree of glory to another. It is that Gospel which Cyril and Methodius proclaimed to the Slavic people in their day; and it is the Gospel which we are called to live out and proclaim today.

### Christ whose body we are

In a few moments we shall be asked in words which have been used by Christians down the centuries when they come together to make Eucharist, to 'lift up our hearts', and the heart in the Bible, let us remember, is the place not of feeling, but of willing and choosing. We are to lift up our choosing, our vision, to the Christ, who came down to the lowest part of our need, and catches us up with him into the heavenly places, catches us up, being drawn into the movement of his self-offering. In doing this we are one with Christians of all times and all places, one in the communion of saints, those made in the likeness of Christ who share in God's holy things. Here in these holy mysteries we find and know who and what we are. As Gerard Manley Hopkins put it, in the awesome darkness: 'over again I feel thy finger and find Thee.' Being fed by the simplest things, this bread and this wine, we are fed in and through these holy things by the Christ whose body we are, and whose body we receive.

As Augustine said so long ago, speaking of what we do in this holy sacrament, 'Behold the mystery of yourselves! Be what you receive, and receive what you are!' **ND**

*This homily was preached at the National Assembly Mass on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October*



# Women in the Episcopate

The Director of Forward in Faith offers an account of the debate on Women in the Episcopate

## Prebendary Sam Philpott:

I beg to move:

That this Assembly

(a) reaffirm our aspiration to flourish within the structures of the Church of England and make our full contribution to its life and mission;

(b) request the General Synod and the House of Bishops to ensure that we have continued access to a ministry which will make this possible; and

(c) thank those members of Forward in Faith who have participated in the facilitated conversations and in the Steering Committee for the Women in the Episcopate legislation with a view to achieving this.

My task today is to bring to you a motion from the Council, and I'm going to do something which I think is tremendously important. First of all, I'm going to warn us against putting too many eggs in a basket labelled: 'Archbishop'. Archbishops might appear to be all powerful: they are not. Our Archbishop will discover perhaps one day, as Archbishop Rowan did, that sometimes General Synod doesn't even listen to its Archbishop. George Carey discovered it. The only person I can remember who seemed to have the General Synod in the palm of his hand, but he did it with wit, was in fact Archbishop Runcie. The Archbishops since then have never ever been able, it seems to me, to stand with a stature that simply awestruck the Synod in a way that it simply went with them. I think Archbishop Justin Welby is a good man and I think Archbishop Sentamu is also a good man, but I want to warn you that we do not pile everything onto their plate. Their burden as Archbishops is heavy enough without us raising our expectations of them; that simply crucifies them.

As catholic Christians we delight, don't we, in our devotions, in our spiritual life? We delight in seeing images. You've only got to look around this building and you will see images, images that are not simply words; the catholic faith puts it in front of our



eyes so we can see, and that mirror images the goodness of God himself. God speaks to us in a word, but his word is a person: his name is Jesus Christ. That person, Jesus Christ, that Word, is broken for us every time you come to the Eucharist, and every time you sit with the Scriptures on your knees, as perhaps you pray the *lectio divina* or whatever else you do in terms of your reading of the Scriptures. That person Jesus Christ, as you 'break' the Scriptures, is broken out of love for you and for me and for his Church: above all for his world. He is broken at the altar, as he comes to birth at the altar through the words of the priest. At the hands of the priest, he is broken out of love for you and for me, and in his brokenness he invites us, and this is the real meaning of our baptism, into the community of love which is the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Perhaps one of the most powerful images for me is God kneeling at the feet of humanity in order to wash our feet. We tend to think that he only knelt before twelve men in an upper room 2000 years ago, but no, he kneels daily,

every moment of every day, before humanity in order to wash our feet, to make us clean so that we are worthy to participate in that community of love which is the Holy Trinity. I'm not for one moment simply saying that I bear no responsibility. I bear a great deal of responsibility, but it seems to me that within this portion of the Catholic Church we have forgotten that the very heart of our faith is charity, and charity is always shown in humility. I've watched over the time that I've been in General Synod, it now seems for ever, and the time I've been in this organization, it now seems for ever, I've actually seen us too quick to pick up the cudgels against one another. Yet Christ is here! Christ is here, usually lying on his back as we wield hammers and hold nails, because we've annihilated the gift of charity, we've *extinguished* almost, except that he saves us from extinction, that life of charity that he invited us into.

I want to say to this Assembly today: For goodness' sake, these aren't mere words! This is the reality of who you and I are. This church of ours, this portion of the Lord's vineyard, needs a

great dose of charity. Let the Catholic constituency begin to love this church; begin to love each and every member of this church whether they agree with us or they don't agree with us. Whether you think they actually want to annihilate you or get rid of you, expel you, push you out, whatever. Let this Catholic constituency show this church how it can become a loving church again within its own communion, in order that it might actually proclaim to a world the love of the God who kneels before us and washes our feet and invites us into the life of God himself.

You might think: 'What's all that got to do with this motion that he's meant to be proposing?' Well, I'm asking for forbearance. You've already heard that Fr Paul Benfield can't tell you much about the Steering Committee's proposals. We're at a particular moment on this journey and I long, I *really* do long, to get off this battlefield and on to the mission field! In my older years as I am meant to have left my parish, but I've gone back to give them a helping hand, I really do regret the wasted hours, the wasted days, the wasted energy that I've had to devote to a cause that this church didn't ever need to pursue and prosecute in the way it has. I watch the cost that that parish has paid in lost energy for mission. I hope Justin Welby and Sentamu are listening, because I want this constituency to say to them: We will be silent. We will be silent. We won't ask to know every detail. We will be silent as this steering group does its work. We will be silent,

because we have a passion to belong to part of the Church that is strong and bold and flourishing and passionate about converting England. In that church we will play our part. All we ask is that at the end of this process our church gives us the space in which we can live a catholic life, looked after by catholic bishops, catholic priests and catholic deacons. Where we can turn our energies away from fighting our brothers and sisters. Where we can turn our energies to the work of mission, and where we can proclaim a God who is love, not just in word, but by the kind of people we are.

It seems to me that your baptism and my baptism is God's invitation to you and to me to grow up into people who, when the Lord looks at us and when the world looks at us, they see with clarity the family likeness with the only-begotten Son. So I hope that you will simply take those words to heart. Even as I speak them, I know that the Lord is speaking to me.

#### **The Revd Charles Razzall:**

Just two comments...

One: I'm an active trades unionist, and at trades union conferences you often get too many motions. I'm so glad that we've only got one, beyond our constitutional motion that we had earlier. And this one is positive and firm and irenic, which, in the light of what Fr Sam has said, is just where we need to be, where perhaps we haven't been and where we certainly want to be in the future: positive, firm and irenic. I just want to make a point about clause (b) and just not in any

way to criticize, perhaps to clarify that, when we use the word 'ensure', that means 'guarantee'; and when we use the word 'continue', that means 'without limit of time'. Because if we're saying we want to be full participants in God's loving mission through the Church of England, which is what we say in clause (a), then we certainly need both 'guarantee' and 'without limit of time'. Thank you.

#### **The Chairman (the Rt Revd Jonathan Baker):**

Thank you, Father, very much indeed.

#### **Prebendary Sam Philpott:**

Can I simply just say: 'thank you'? Because when I retired, which I haven't, Bishop John Salt, who was at the House of the Sacred Mission with me, sent me a little message and it's a quote from the Kelham Principles; any Kelham-trained priest here will know exactly: 'Always remember: God speaks most often in silence.' It seems to me that the silence of this assembly is to allow God to speak: to speak to us, to speak through us to our church, and hopefully to speak through our church to world again. I long for a Church of England that may well have different views on this particular subject, but will so provide for its children that it can actually speak to a broken world about reconciliation with an authenticity that is simply not around in our world at this moment.

Thank you. **ND**

*The Chairman put the motion  
and it was carried nem con.*





# Do not be afraid

A Benediction meditation from the **Bishop of Ebbsfleet**

‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?’  
St John 14.1—2

## Living relationship

These words of Jesus have sometimes been used to suggest that in heaven we all have reserved suites; that the Father’s house has ample rooms for everybody. Sometimes that is how we think of our destiny as individuals, as churches, even as world communions.

But it won’t do to think of our Christian destiny, our Christian future, as one in which we simply live in separate homes. What Christ wills for his people is that they be where he is, and because they are in living relationship with him, they are also in living relationship with one another. Shaped by one another; sometimes conditioned, limited, even hurt by one another; yet also challenging and renewing one another.

## Many places to stay

The word that has been translated ‘dwelling places’ can also mean ‘lodgings’, ‘overnight rests’. Perhaps we can gain a better sense of Jesus’s words if we think of an unfamiliar translation that says: ‘In my Father’s house there are many places to stay, many stages along the Way’. That casts a very different light on the whole of our Christian life, our journey together as individuals, as parishes, and as churches. It helps us to think better about the Father’s house, the great space of God’s love, into which Jesus Christ leads us because it is his home. It is a place so vast that we are always journeying into it. Christ prepares the way, and returns to guide us deeper into God. As we move forward into the mystery of God he challenges us again and again to do so in communion, in fellowship with others on the same journey, in the same Way.

## No way but forward

‘In my Father’s house there are many lodging places, many overnight rests’ because in my Father’s house there is always more to discover, more of the depth of our Father’s reality. It is perhaps in *that* sense that St Teresa of Avila takes up the gospel image of ‘dwelling places’ to describe the journey of each individual person. We move, she says, through the *Interior Castle* of the soul, toward God who is at the very centre of everything. We move from level to level, from room to room, seeking the One who is at the centre, knowing that he draws us forward for all time. As he draws us

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**Christ takes us gently by the shoulders and says, ‘Step forward because I am with you’.**

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forward by his grace, we recognize that, as Teresa says, if we stop we fall back: there is no way but forward; there is no way without growth.

Today we are bound to be thinking and praying about what the future holds for our unity and growth as Anglicans who hold fast the traditional faith and order of the Church catholic, and we are bound to wonder what that hope will bring. St John gives us our answer, the only answer that there has ever been. Our journey must be to the place where Christ is, ‘next to the Father’s heart’, Christ’s home and ours. It is a journey on which we are bound to be drawn more and more to one another.

## Dawn of expectation

It is a story of stopping and starting, of night falling without a clear programme for the next day; of a dawn of expectation and hope whose details we cannot yet discern. Sometimes the light is so bright—or the darkness so dark—that we can’t see the path. Sometimes, as Newman put it, the situation is one in which

‘one step’ must be enough for us.

Our assurance is that Christ walks before us and walks with us. He is the Way, he has cleared the path to the Father’s heart. No other can do it; no other has done it, the way is clear because he, Jesus, has made it clear: a holy way upon which God’s people journey back, rejoicing, to their home. At every stage he understands the frustrations, the sufferings, the doubts, that assail us as individuals and as communities. He understands because is fully human how hard the road can be to that one place where as human beings we all belong: that one place ‘next to the Father’s heart’. His promise is to be there so that we experience his love and his compassion, and his continuing challenge to grow, for to stop growing is to move backwards.

## Christ with us

So at night we rest sometimes on our way; and each morning Christ wakes us and says, ‘It is another day, another journey into the mystery of the Father’. We all know this in our daily lives as disciples: the times when we feel we understand very little, when we’ve hit a brick wall; the times when Christ, as you might imagine, takes us gently by the shoulders and says, ‘Step forward because I am with you’.

## Trust in God

Trust in God because it is God’s eternal will that there be a place next to his heart for all of us. That is the place prepared before the world began. Trust God for it.

Trust Jesus Christ who has opened up the way to that place of joy and offering and eternal intimacy; whose sacred heart is with us every step of the way – in sorrow and in joy, in doubt and in clarity.

Trust also Christ’s broken body: that strange assortment of sinful, confused human beings who stumble across the light of Christ, and are drawn by him into the place he calls home. Put your trust in one another as we walk together in faith, because God’s promise cannot be undone. **ND**