

newdirections

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Seeking for Truth

Hannah Phillips reflects on the ways in which the decision to ordain women changed the nature of the Church

Also in this issue:

- Richard Norman considers the nature of Anglican Catholicism
- Martin Dales reports on the General Synod
- Julian Mann replies to the Bishop of Sheffield

parish directory

BARRY St Mary's, Holton Road, near rail, bus and town centre *Credo Gyrnu (Fif Wales)* Sunday: Solemn Mass 8am and 11am, Sunday Club 11am; **St Cadoc's, Coldbrook Road** Sunday: Solemn Mass 9.30am, Vespers 6pm Saturday Benediction 1st Saturday of the month. Parish Priest: Fr Ben Andrews ssc 01446 406690

BEXHILL on SEA St Augustine's, Cooden Drive, TN39 3AZ Sunday: Mass at 8am, Parish Mass with Junior Church at 10am. Further details: Father Robert Coates ssc 01424 210 785

BIRMINGHAM St Agatha, Stratford Road, Sparkbrook (B11 1QT) 'Any similarity between the Church of England and St Agatha's is purely coincidental!' (A Diocesan Official - 2001) Sunday Mass 11am. Secure Parking. Canon John Herve ssc - 0121 449 2790

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

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

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

BOURNEMOUTH St Ambrose, West Cliff Road, BH4 8BE. *A Forward in Faith Parish with Resolutions ABC in place*. Sunday: 8am Low Mass BCP, 10am Sung Mass Traditional Ceremonial, modern Rite, 6pm 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 Service 6.30pm - first Sunday of each month and major festivals. For information about all services during the Interregnum contact Barbara Geatrell 01425 470370 or Dean Quinton 01425 672601 Churchwardens www.stfrancis-bournemouth.org.uk

BRADFORD St Chad, Toller Lane (B6144, 1 mile from city centre). Sunday services: Low Mass 8.30am, Solemn Mass 10.45am, Evensong and Benediction 6.30pm. Weekday Masses 8am (except Wednesday 7.30pm and Thursday 9.15am). Parish Priest: Canon Ralph Crowe ssc 01274 543957. *Resolutions ABC*. English Missal/BCP www.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, Wed 9am, Thur 10am. Parish Priest: Fr Peter Edwards 01308 456588

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

BRISTOL All Saints, Pembroke Road, Clifton (near zoo and suspension bridge) Sunday: 8am Mass, 9.30am Family service (Mass 2nd and 4th Sunday), 11am Solemn Mass (children's group), 6pm Evening Service with Benediction. Feast days: 7.30pm Solemn Mass. Daily Mass. Confessions: Saturday 11.30am, 5.30pm or by

arrangement. *Resolutions ABC (Ebbsfleet)*. Information, appointments: Fr Richard 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. Priest in Charge Fr Christopher Kinch 01179 712 496

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



BRISTOL Holy Nativity

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

CHARD The Good Shepherd, Fumham. *Resolutions ABC* Sunday: Sung Mass 9.45am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction (3rd Sunday only) 6pm. Weekday Masses: Tues 10am. Contact: Heather McCann on 01 460 64531

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

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

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

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

FOLKESTONE Kent, St Peter on the East Cliff *A Forward in Faith Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richmond*. Sunday: 8am Low Mass, 10.30am Solemn Mass, 6pm Evening Prayer. Weekdays - Low Mass: Tues 7pm, Thur 12 noon. During Interregnum - tel: 01303 254472 www.stpeterschurchfolkestone.org.uk - stpetersfolk@yahoo.co.uk

GRIMSBY St Augustine, Legsby Avenue Lovely Grade II Church by Sir Charles Nicholson. *A Forward in Faith Parish under Bishop of Richmond*. Sunday: Mass 9am, Parish Mass 10.30am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction 6pm. Weekday Mass: Wed 9.30am. Contact Mr T Jones 01472 871673

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

HEMPTON Holy Trinity (near Fakenham, Norfolk). *ABC, 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 Lockett ssc 01328 820030

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

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

LIVERPOOL St Agnes and St Pancras, Toxteth Park (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 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 or phone 0208 364 1583

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

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

LONDON SE16 St Mary Rotherhithe, St Marychurch Street SE16 4JE *A Fulham Parish*. Sunday: Solemn Mass 10am,

Continued on page 37

content

Vol 16 No 213

February 2013

regulars

10 FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

ARTHUR MIDDLETON
on action replays

12 DEVOTIONAL

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM on fasting

12 GHOSTLY COUNSEL

ANDY HAWES on repentance

19 THE WAY WE LIVE NOW

CHRISTOPHER SMITH
ponders mission in the city

DIRECTORY	2, 37, 38
30 DAYS	16
EDITORIAL	20
LETTERS	21
FOOTNOTES	35
FIF UPDATE	36
THOUGHT OF THE DAY	39
PEVS' DIARIES	39

28 BOOK OF THE MONTH

IAN McCORMACK
reviews *Cosmo Lang:
Archbishop in War and Crisis*

34 SECULAR LITURGIES

TOM SUTCLIFFE
on Seven Psychopaths

35 TOUCHING PLACE

SIMON COTTON
on Our Lady of Perpetual
Succour, Great Billing

4 LEAD STORY

Seeking for truth

HANNAH PHILLIPS

reflects on the changing
nature of the Church

5 'Look to him and be radiant'

HEIDI COOPER

on Carmelite reflections

6 What's in a name?

RICHARD NORMAN

on the launch of
Anglican Catholic Future

8 Time to talk statistics

MICHAEL KEULEMANS

considers the size
of the constituency

8 To division add derision

ALAN EDWARDS

stands firm

9 A failure to respect

MARTIN DALES

reminds Synod of the need
to listen to minorities

11 What's wrong with gay marriage?

NICHOLAS TURNER

explains the arguments
of the new
Archbishop of Canterbury

13 A Conservative Evangelical responds to Bishop Steven Croft

JULIAN MANN

writes to his diocesan bishop

14 The heart's discovery

PETER CSWG

reminds us of the
crucial place of prayer

17 The liberal agenda

DIGBY ANDERSON

paints a worrying picture
of the future

18 Towers

repetition and imitation

21 St Valentine

A poem by Peter Mullen

22 Views, reviews & previews

ART: Owen Higgs on

The Northern Renaissance

MUSIC: Peter Westfield on Parry:

*Works for Chorus and
Orchestra*

BOOKS: Richard Norman

on *Our Church*

John Twisleton on

Why Tolerate Religion?

and Jesus of Nazareth:

The Infancy Narratives

John Gribben CR on

Eros and Agape:

The Two Sides of Love

George Nairn-Briggs on

Letters to a Non-Believer

Sam Smith on *Creative*

Ideas for Children's Worship

29 A priest forever

MARK NICHOLLS

preaches at the ordination
of Richard Norman

31 'Anglican heritage' and Rome

HELEN BROCK

shares her concerns about
the Ordinariate

33 No God or know God?

JOHN HERVE

says it's all Kant



The Church of England welcomes free speech!



LEAD STORY

Seeking for Truth

Hannah Phillips reflects on the ways in which the decision to ordain women changed the nature of the Church

making
alterations
to the
language
we were
given by
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Many years ago when a vote was passed to ordain female priests, I was a teenager. The news had little impact in my convent school, except for Father wandering around muttering under his breath as to how this would change the nature of the Church. Now, I understand what that poor priest (in a school full of girls) was muttering under his breath. The nature of the Church changed on that day and continues to be manipulated by a secular philosophy.

Different and complementary

No longer is being a 'woman' or 'mother' seen as being something to desire. In fact most of the time it is portrayed as someone failing to reach their full potential. This is not the image that God desired when he sent an Angel to an innocent girl and gave her the gift of carrying the Messiah. Echoed in that acclamation from Elizabeth, 'Hail Mary, full of Grace' is the message that this was a great and wonderful vocation from God. Mary both chose to accept this immense gift, but also bore with strength the sacrifices that came with it.

The Holy Mother has embodied the feminine characteristics that help to make the Gospels the powerful scriptures they are. The gift of the Messiah, born of a woman, was a boy. The maleness of Christ is essential to the narratives in the Bible. The significance of the two genders being different and complementary is written throughout the Bible, first of all as the People of Israel (God's chosen people) being portrayed as a loved wife. The imagery is then carried on as the Church itself being the Bride of Christ and is therefore evident in the writing of our Liturgy.

Stumbling block

To propose, even for a moment, that our omnipotent God had not known the implications of the impact of creating these roles, is to underestimate him. Should he have chosen to have reversed the parts of the sexes I am sure he could have done so, with success. Therefore the view of secular culture encounters a stumbling block, when advocating an apparently gender-neutral view of roles. The two genders are different and God created us

to be so. It is generally considered that a female athlete would not compete against a male one, as she acknowledges she has no chance of success. This however does not in any way diminish the fact that she is a great athlete. So in the matter of Holy Orders, I believe that men and women were chosen for different roles within the Church. Saying that a woman cannot be a priest is not in any way undermining her value as a person, called to fullness of ministry in Baptism. Nor does it make her unequal in the eyes of God. 'We are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3.28), without all being/doing the same things.

Gender-neutral language

The eventual consequence of this concept of equality is actually that we should have to rewrite the entire basis on which the Church operates. The Bible and the Liturgy are all intrinsically based on Father and Son being male. Already there is a requirement in some places to replace gender-specific words. The Lord's Prayer itself, with words given by Jesus, would need to change. Making these alterations to the language we were given by God fundamentally changes the overall message we were given. To replace every reference to man and woman with gender-neutral words would alter our perception of the narratives, therefore distorting the identity of the Holy Trinity and the message of the Gospels.

Irreversibly broken

When we admitted women into Holy Orders we began to change the course of our future as a Church. When Jesus made the decision to appoint twelve male Apostles, he established a line of apostolic succession. In admitting women to Holy Orders we interrupted this line of succession that God appointed, through Christ. However, there is a small corner of the Church that has preserved the apostolic succession. For me and others in my tradition, admitting women to the Episcopate, with no provision for extended oversight, means that our connection with the line of apostolic succession is irreversibly broken.

Completely at peace

Recently I have had suggestions that I believe the theology I do either because I am angry at

them having the choice, that I am jealous of female priests, that I have been brainwashed by men, or simply that I hate women. The latter in particular would involve me hating myself, and nothing could be further from the truth. I am completely at peace with the life I have and feel called to. It does not feel like I have not reached my potential as every day I teach, make peace, nurture and bring up the future of the Church. I have the time to enjoy my children and have more than enough to do sharing my knowledge of the Church and of God with them.

I had the choice to explore ordination, long before it would ever have occurred to me. I chose not to follow that path. In doing so I hope to teach my daughter that there is something to be celebrated in being a mother, that it is not something in which you can fail to reach your potential, as society seems to imply, but a mysterious and glorious gift from God.

Not a right

What I am angered by, however, is the insistence that women have a right to be bishops. No one, not even a man, has a right to it. It is a calling from God, that should be approached humbly. Those who desire the post are most obviously the ones who should not receive it. I see women in the news saying 'I want' with the expectation that they will just get because society in some way owes them. It concerns

to assume I have a vendetta against women is to disregard years of discernment

me that we give our daughters the idea that in order to be something you have to be like a man. It also gives them this notion that society owes them some form of automatic promotion just because they are a woman and therefore at a disadvantage.

The other result of this has been the example of democracy we have given our children. When the vote goes your way by just two votes, it is fine and the Holy Spirit is working. However, if it goes against the loudest voice by six votes, the system is broken and the Holy Spirit is not present. What kind of message does that give to the future of the Church?

A valid theology

Most of all I am frustrated at the lack of understanding of traditional Anglo-Catholic theology and the readiness of people to jump to the conclusions as to why it is practised. My beliefs have been well thought out as you have seen above. There have been many sacrifices in my life in order to follow traditional Church values, some of them on other issues than this. Still I believe those sacrifices have been worth paying. To assume I have a vendetta against women is to disregard years of discernment. All I ask is that you take time to understand what it is I and many others believe to be the truth of the Church. It is not something you need to accept, but respecting that it is a valid theology (one that is not rooted in misogyny) would be a start. **ND**

'Look to him and be radiant'

It is not always practical to 'go off and pray' during the day, but I find my relationship with Jesus is sustained by a brief glance at his face. I keep favourite holy pictures in my prayer book and around my home and I can easily see him in my mind's eye. If I do not know how to pray I can simply look at him with love. The gaze becomes mutual. If I look at him long enough I may eventually come to bear his resemblance, to look like him! 'We will become like him because we are his true likeness' (1 John 3.2).

This is the goal for every one of us, and it starts with that first glance. I wonder how many married couples think about when they first clapped eyes on their future spouse... or how they continue to look at each other as they grow deeper into a relationship together?

For St Thérèse of Lisieux, the love of God became known in looking upon Christ. The gaze of the Other... Often the look precedes the word and says more than the message itself. 'Jesus looked at him' (the rich young man

(Mark 10.21) and 'I saw you under the fig tree' (John 1.48) said Jesus to Nathaniel. This first glance establishes the relationship; the ongoing gaze of adoration deepens the relationship.

St Thérèse wrote to her Sister Celine, on 26 April 1892, explaining what she meant by this resemblance: 'I see with amazement when the morning dew falls on the corolla of the daisies which turn to face the Sun, they rise to seek the Sun, this rising star which also sends them warm radiance, the timid flowers half opening their petals... Throughout the day the daisies never cease to fix themselves to the Sun, turning with it until evening. When Jesus looks on the soul, he also gives it the divine resemblance, but only if the soul never ceases to fix its gaze upon him.'

The Lord looked at Thérèse and Thérèse read in that look the tenderness and beauty of his face. She met Jesus and looked at him longingly. She appended her Religious name when she was clothed in the habit, calling herself Sister Thérèse of the



Child Jesus and of the Holy Face. Thérèse reflected the beauty of the Face of Jesus in the Church. You and I are also invited to be witnesses of the Holy Face of Jesus, full of tenderness and goodness.

Carmelites in France observe the feast day of the Holy Face on Shrove Tuesday. Thus we can begin Lent by gazing on the Holy Face of the 'Man of Sorrows' and come to the glorious light of his Resurrected countenance.

Sister Heidi Cooper SCL

What's in a name?

Richard Norman on the imminent launch of *Anglican Catholic Future*

Little more accurately characterizes Anglo-Catholicism than the inclination toward the foundation of an astonishing array of guilds, societies and unions: the history of our Movement is littered with the proliferation of such associations. Enter *Anglican Catholic Future*, whose national launch we await in April. ACF describes itself on its website as 'a network of parishes and individuals that seek to proclaim and embody the Catholic faith in the Church of England...to complement rather than compete with existing Catholic groupings.' So far, so good.

Return to fundamentals

Expressions of support are invited from those willing to subscribe to a statement of principles, which speaks of formation in the Catholic tradition for 'Catholic practice, piety and theology.' ACF envisages a return to 'the fundamentals of the apostolic faith, but without recourse to political agendas and party rivalries.' The statement concludes with rousing fanfare: '[we] believe that the time has come for the implicit Catholic identity of our church to be made explicit. We look back to the Oxford Movement... and forward to the revitalisation of our church and nation as we recall our secularising culture to its spiritual inheritance.'

In fairness, there is much to be lauded in this declaration. However, much of concern also appears to underlie this initiative. One worry is the idea of a return to apostolic fundamentals 'but without recourse to political agendas and party rivalries.' For what this in fact suggests is that, for the proponents of an ACF, issues such as the ordination of women and the redefinition of marriage are issues of political opinion rather than theological conviction, whereas for members of Forward in Faith and our collaborators, such issues not only imperil the mission – and indeed the very Catholic identity – of the Church, but are moreover symptomatic of the *abandonment* of 'the fundamentals of

the apostolic faith.'

First-order issues

The ACF statement appears to propose a common ground between various shades of Catholic expression which stands above flashpoint issues, whereas convictions in respect of these issues are in fact indicative of radically divergent understandings of Catholic truth. Certainly the ordination of women and same-sex marriage are not creedal matters: but attitudes toward the authority of Scripture and Tradition; toward the unity of the Church, and toward the integrity of revelation are very much

Affirming Catholicism repopulates the vocabulary of the faith with innovation

first-order issues. There is no more basic level to which one can retreat without evacuating the Catholic faith of its essential meaning.

Nor does the ACF website give much reason to suppose a true Anglican Catholic comprehensiveness. Not a single Trustee or scheduled speaker is of traditional Catholic integrity: indeed among this number are members of General Synod who voted in favour of the women bishops legislation in November despite clear warnings from traditionalists that the legislation was wholly inadequate.

The Oxford Movement

The trouble is that for many in the Church of England Catholicism is an idiom rather than a conviction. Let us not forget that the Oxford Movement never defined itself against evangelicalism, but against theological liberalism and state interference in the affairs of the Church. The pioneers of ACF are to a (wo)man well known for their theological liberalism and for revisions of the faith once delivered which would quite clearly have been



deeply unpalatable to the Fathers of the Oxford Movement. As Catholics in the Church of England, we hold and teach the faith as *received*, not as reinterpreted and revised. Our concern is not for innovation but for fidelity.

Fault-line

This is more crucial than at first it might seem, for it goes to the heart of the fault-line between traditional and affirming Catholics. As traditionalists we genuinely believe that the faith as once delivered, as apostolically transmitted and received, is in itself sufficient for the conversion and salvation of souls. The affirming Catholic, on the other hand, believes that each generation must be inspired anew by some (undefined) basic Christian formula, recreating the deposit of faith in a vocabulary resemblant of what has gone before but not necessarily consonant with this tradition.

For the affirming Catholic, the only necessary consonance is with the mythic base formula – what ACF calls 'the fundamentals of the apostolic faith' – while for the traditional Catholic consonance between the faith of contemporary Christians and the Tradition of the Catholic Church is of similar necessity. This is because traditionalists see in the apostolicity of the Church the uncorrupted (though sometimes obscured) transmission of the deposit of faith. For us in Forward in Faith, Catholic Tradition means the transmission of a doctrinal ethos; for affirming Catholics what is handed on is simply the Catholic idiom.

Affirming Catholicism repopulates the vocabulary of the faith with innovation, while the traditionalist position defends and maintains the Catholic kernel.

Faith and practice

There is a relatively simple test by means of which one can determine whether a development in doctrine is Catholic: ask, after St Vincent of Lérins, whether it is such as could be believed by those known to be Catholic. The ordination of women, for instance, is not an issue which could be affirmed by Roman Catholic or Orthodox Christians of our day, nor does it fit with the theological systems of Pusey et al. The communion of saints is premised upon the profession of a unitary Faith. One cannot fail to recall the words of Archbishop Fisher that the Church of England has no doctrine of its own save that of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. What we practice and teach must resound with Catholic consonance. In consequence, Catholic profession cannot fail to have 'political' implications, if by these are understood implications which take faith forward into practice, crucially into the fields of ecclesiology and moral behaviour.

Resigned to pluralism

The ACF website envisages a focus upon 'theology, spirituality and the life of prayer, liturgy and worship, vocation and priesthood, ecumenism and social justice': this more than likely means theological debate at the expense of doctrinal truth, ritualism at the expense of the sacramental economy, and ecumenical dialogue at the expense of the pursuit of unity. The desire to 'complement' existing Catholic groupings is at best a resignation to Catholic pluralism – or perhaps parallelism – rather than Catholic unity. Forward in Faith has long realized the need to make common cause with those in the Church of England whose Christian opinions rest upon the faith once delivered, which is why we work with conservative evangelicals and others who uphold the apostolic faith as a deposit closed to essential revision. We share with them key convictions as to the nature of revelation and

authority, and understand Christian witness in terms of the maintenance and dissemination of the faith of the Apostles, and therefore not as the reworking of that proclamation in ways inspired by, but lacking consonance with, the historic formulation and profession of the apostolic witness.

The traditionalist/liberal split stems fundamentally from the abandonment of biblical expectations of Christ's second coming – biblical *eschatology* – which underpin biblical notions of Christian community, especially as articulated in the letters of St Paul. As the Church was led to reassess its understanding of Christ's imminent return, elements within the Church replaced expectancy with progress as Christianity's internal dynamic, a binary which persists in the Church today. Traditionalists feel an impetus to mission on account of a continuing

Catholic identity is not the future of the CofE so much as a present and continuing reality

belief in the imminence of Christ's return in glory, whereas this impetus for liberals derives from a commitment to progress toward Christ's Kingdom. Imminence mandates conservatism whereas progress mandates innovation. Imminence encourages fidelity whereas progress encourages continual reconfiguration.

Eternal relevance

In recent times, for example, the traditionalist emphasis on conservative fidelity has shone through in Pope Benedict's thought on the ecology of the human person. The liberal concern for innovative reconfiguration is central to talk of the Church's relevance to contemporary society in the wake of the November vote in Synod. Indeed, relevance is a motivating factor in innovation: but the traditional Catholic conviction has always been that, because 'all things were created through him and for him', so Christ and the preaching of his Gospel have an eternal relevance to the world: the good news of salvation does not change. When we speak

of conversion we mean conversion to Christ, who is the world's axis and foundation. Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is the Alpha and the Omega, and the great Amen: the Church preaches Christ the Word made flesh, the definitive Word, the principal and conclusive Word.

A final critical mistake of ACF and its liberal proponents concerns the implications of the... Catholic identity of our church [*sic*]. Affirming Catholic literature has argued that in virtue of the Church of England's Catholic identity therefore it is resourced and justified in making changes to Holy Order – it can do so because it is authentically Catholic. But this is to divorce the privileges of Catholicism from its responsibilities. Truly to understand the Church's Catholicism is to realize its utter lack of autonomy: the Church is not self-justifying, but is justified by the Precious Blood of Christ. The Church is not autonomous but 'Christonomous'.

Responsibilities

Furthermore, a denomination's Catholicity is not licence: rather, it is relational. To be of the Catholic Church means to be responsible to all other Catholics. Innovation rarely satisfies this condition of responsibility, for only by moving together can the Churches not create but *discover* fresh insights into the unchanging deposit of faith. Catholic identity is not the future of the Church of England so much as a present and continuing reality. The unearthing of that identity will not be achieved through innovation but through fidelity, by going forward *in* faith and not forward *toward* faith.

Those who subscribe to the notion of an *Anglican Catholic Future* must realize the logic of their own convictions, logic which stresses communion as foundational rather than aspirational. For Catholics in the Church of England Catholicity is the bedrock of practice, piety and theology rather than the idiom in which these are conducted. It is a reality to which Christ calls us to be faithful, by which Christian hope supersedes mere optimism, and in which the love of God finds concrete expression. Our Anglican Catholic Future rests in going Forward in Faith. **ND**

Time to talk statistics

Michael Keulemans reminds us that the orthodox minority represents one third of the CofE

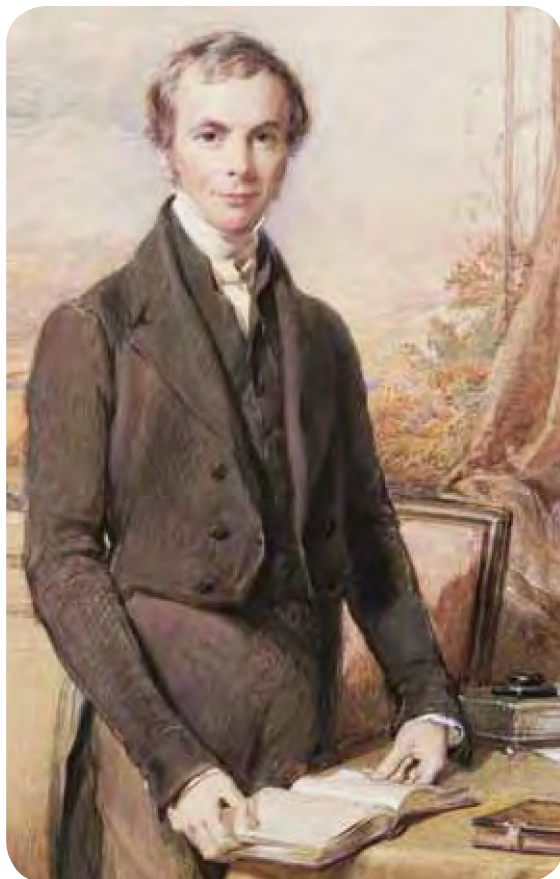
At last the cat is out of the bag! If you are a traditional cleric who cannot in all conscience agree with women priests or bishops – and probably if you make the added mistake of believing in traditional marriage – you will be shouted down by the liberals and thereby disqualify yourself from ever becoming a bishop, let alone a dean or an archdeacon. With opinions like that, how could you expect to be a focus of unity? Despite the fact the same could be said of almost every modern-day bishop.

Although the General Synod's House of Laity had the decency to stall the legislation because enough of its members were anxious not to exclude orthodox Catholics and Evangelicals from the Church, our constituency singly failed to inform the public about the numbers we represent. From my doctoral research, undertaken in the two English dioceses of Leicester and Bradford in 2007, I discovered that 31% of churchwardens were either against or uncertain about women bishops. In the Welsh diocese of Monmouth it rose to 37%. Significantly, all these sees are relatively poor in Forward in Faith and Reform parishes. Furthermore other statistics, such as those from *Christian Research*, commissioned for New Directions also point to the orthodox minority standing at roughly one third.

These figures have been studiously avoided in the media coverage so far, but they are of prime importance to deploy in our future arguments. After all, the Lib Dems have sunk to below 10% in current opinion polls but nobody is suggesting that they should therefore be summarily dismissed from the Coalition Government. Even Labour manages to nudge only around 40%! For this reason, it must

be patently obvious that the time has come for us to go into the attack.

Until now, we have appealed to the majority to play fair and have been willing to accept even the smallest crumbs on offer, believing that Christian charity would guarantee us a sympathetic hearing. Now that we



are fully aware that we represent no less than one third of lay opinion – the Church's paying customers, if you like – we should have no hesitation whatever in pressing for a Third Province, where, without getting into the hair of the majority, we can continue to follow Holy Scripture and the Catholic tradition our Church upheld until 1992. If that fails we must push for at least one non-geographical diocese in each province. At this late stage nothing less will do. If he were able to see our increasingly humanist state trying to interfere in so many aspects of the Church's internal affairs, I have a feeling that John Keble would be embarking on a whole year of Assize Sermons. **ND**

To division add derision

When the Bishops issued their 'Gay Bishops' statement, Rod Thomas of Reform, always a prophetic voice, said that division lay ahead that would make arguments over women bishops appear mild by comparison. He might also have voiced the opinion that derision, as well as division, would be the consequence.

For some years clergy have been allowed to enter civil partnerships on the proviso that they remained celibate. The modern Liberal Movement has reclaimed, by this provision, an odd aspect of medievalism – the sexless marriage.

If the 'man and woman in the street' are aware of celibate clerical civil partnerships, their derisive response is likely to be that of Mandy Rice-Davies, 'they would say that wouldn't they?'

The advent of gay bishops increases public attention. It also enables the gay lobby to claim that homosexual clergy face discrimination. If the Church's discipline has been relaxed to allow heterosexual clergy who have committed adultery, after due repentance, to continue in ministry, on the 'Go and sin no more' principle, why should homosexuals be under the discipline of perpetual celibacy?

If recent church history teaches anything, it is that the Liberal bandwagon within the CofE has built up such momentum that it is unstoppable. How long before the celibacy requirement for gay bishops and also clergy is relaxed as non-discrimination demands?

Fr Thomas is right in claiming that female episcopacy and the possibility of actively homosexual clergy are issues of a different order. Arguments for the ordination of women could be made from Scripture.

The eventual, and sadly probable, sanctioning of continuing homosexual activity is in complete defiance of Scripture (Rom. 1).

Alan Edwards

A failure to respect

Martin Dales on the aftermath of the General Synod vote and his hopes for future discussions of the women bishops legislation

The General Synod of the Church of England has, unusually, been making the headlines following its vote which rejected a legislative package designed to allow women to become bishops. The reason that train crash occurred was because of the failure by those who wanted this to happen in not 'hearing' the voice of those who needed a continuation of the 20-year-old Act of Synod.

The Act provides for people who hold to the traditional beliefs of the Church, which have been practised since the time of Christ, and enables them to be pastorally and spiritually cared for by male clergy and bishops. If the vote had gone through, that provision would have disappeared and a sizeable minority of the Church of England would have been left with no assurance as to a future in our national church.

Voting thresholds

A Final Vote requires there to be a two-thirds majority in each of the three Houses that make up the General Synod – Bishops, Clergy and Laity – and it was in the House of Laity that it fell. In fact, over 27% of members of General Synod, including 36% of the House of Laity, voted against the proposals and that included me. It was a situation that was avoidable.

The result reflected very accurately the recent opinion poll conducted by Christian Research where some 75% said there should be continued provision and 31% were opposed to the consecration of women as bishops; and in our Diocesan Synods, some 25% voted against the legislation and, where Following Motions were put, some 25% came to the same view on the need for provision. So to say the House of Laity is not representative of the Church of England is patently untrue.

The House of Bishops is certainly unrepresentative of the Church of England as it currently thinks with 94% of them voting in favour, something those involved with the processes of the Crown Nominations Commission might wish to consider as they consider future appointments. There is, then, an argument that for this important type of business, the threshold of 75% in each House should need to be reached rather than 66%.

The Church's mission

The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England met in Sheffield recently and, among other matters, discussed the vote in Synod. In a statement issued, they said, 'As part of their reflections, many council members commented on the deep degree of sadness and shock that they had felt as a result of the vote and also of the need to affirm all women serving the church – both lay and ordained – in their ministries.'

What about all the men – both lay and ordained? And why was it that over 50% of the laity who voted against this were women? What is needed is the affirming of everybody,

whatever their ministries, whether bishop, priest, flower arranger, church warden, treasurer, or any other role.

The Church family in the Church of England is about embracing all who are part of it and those who are not, whether in members of congregations or residents in a parish. The mission of the Church and the teaching of Christ have always been on the side of minorities and the marginalized in society. How much more then should it be practised in bodies such as General Synod and our parishes?

Not enough prayer

So what is the future and what can be done about both issues of women bishops and provision? One of the ways forward might be to look at what the Church in Wales is trying to achieve in having separate arrangements for both matters and not having one without the other.

It is clear that, so far, there has been too much process and not enough prayer. I hope that in 2013, much effort will be made to ensure that all sides meet together, and it was encouraging to hear from the House of Bishops that this is their intention. In a speech at General Synod, I suggested that before it meets again next July, we might have a Sacred Synod or indaba meetings, rather than the formal setting of General Synod operating under its Standing Orders. Indaba groups were introduced by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the 2008 Lambeth Conference who described them as 'middle-sized groups for discussion of larger issues.'

Vote of no confidence

It is deeply disappointing, therefore, that in January, some of our number in the House of Laity seem hell-bent on a blood-letting session and have triggered a costly (in a variety of respects and not just financial) special meeting of the House calling for a vote of no confidence in our chairman, Philip Giddings, and all because he spoke in the debate. Over 100 people spoke in the debate and differing views were quite rightly expressed, and Dr Giddings was perfectly entitled to say what he did.

This is 'messy church' and even Parliament wants to leave us to our own devices which, as we are a predominantly elected body, is surely right. As Geoffrey Cox, MP for Torridge and West Devon, said in the Commons debate, at which less than 5% of MPs were in attendance, 'The things we are dealing with are precious to us all... I cannot bring myself to believe that (having to wait for a few years) is the presiding imperative, set against the harmony and unity of the Church... we should allow the Church to heal itself on its own.'

There is a way – there was in the Nineties expressed in the promises that were made and through the Act of Synod – and under God and the guidance of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, we will find it in 2013. **ND**

**this is 'messy church' and
even Parliament wants to
leave us to our own devices**

faith of our fathers

Arthur Middleton on action replays

In the present antics of the Church of England Canon A5 has been lost sight of. This states that the doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures. In particular such doctrine is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. The conception of the Church which we have inherited, founded by the Lord himself, perpetuated by direct succession from the Apostles, one in continuous history and in doctrine with the Primitive Church, filled with a supernatural and sacramental life, witnessing to a high moral standard before the world seems to have been ignored, even abandoned.

Earlier identity crisis

When the Church of England was suffering the persecution of Oliver Cromwell, it was to Dr Hammond (1605–60), more than to any other single man, that she owed the continuance of her existence. It was by his holiness, charity and devoted labours that a tone was given to the clergy of that period which bore good fruit afterwards.

The Interregnum was the time

between 1649, the year of Charles I's execution by a parliament dominated by Puritans and the restoration in 1660–2 of the Church of England and the Book of Common Prayer. During this time Henry Hammond is the embodiment of Anglicanism when Cromwell attempted to presbyterianize the Church of England and a Puritan Parliament forbade the use of the Book of Common Prayer, replacing it with a *Directory of Worship*. Attempts were made to destroy the identity of the Church of England and in consequence the Anglican mind.

Hammond was in the tradition of Hooker and Andrewes, expressing himself in the same kind of way and through his writings illustrating the impact of the *Ecclesiastical Polity* in the thought of the day. It is not surprising to find that a balanced relationship between Scripture, Antiquity and Reason formed the core of his theological method with a concern for history, biblical texts and language, liturgical and devotional matters.

Intellectual defence

The basic conviction of Hammond's ecclesiology is that the Church of England was 'the most careful observer, and transcriber of

primitive antiquity.'

Such men as Hammond were fully aware that 'the Church could not survive its days of adversity by a policy of mere aloofness and obstruction, but must justify its intransigence on theological and historical grounds'. It is due in large measure to his efforts and his encouragement of others that the Interregnum became in fact a golden age of High Anglican theology and apologetic. Hammond was the first to realize that a defence of Anglicanism must be intellectually sound. His aim and that of his circle was to build an edifice of reasoned theology in support of Laudian Church principles, which not only moderated them but made them intelligible to their opponents.

This need was crucially urgent so Hammond began building an intellectual defence for the faith, whose outward structure, the Church, lay in ruins. It was a banned and persecuted Church.

Despite this antipathy towards, and persecution of everything the Church of England stood for, Hammond's dream was slowly being realized as the theological output at this time became an impressive witness to the strength of Anglican orthodoxy in a young school of theologians nurtured by William Laud before his execution.

Paramount duty

Such people as Hammond, his biographer Dr Fell of Christ Church, Oxford, Mark Frank, Herbert Thorndike, and a host of others all suffered privations or discrimination because of their unwillingness to reject the Anglican mind in favour of the Establishment mind. What led them not to compromise?

For them their paramount duty is to the Catholic Church; their subordinate and derivative duty is to the Church of England as the representative of the Catholic Church in this country. The Catholic Church is known by its faithfulness to the primitive model. The Church of England has no choice but to follow that model, and must seek to apply the principle rigorously and exactly. This is where we must stand amidst the secular innovations of today's Establishment mind and thereby save the Church of England from losing its memory. **ND**



keeping the show on the road

What's wrong with gay marriage?

Nicholas Turner responds to *Equal Marriage: the Government's Response* and searches for what clues it may provide about the forthcoming legislation

There is much to be said for gay marriage. Checking through past issues of ND, I notice I was commending it, as an option in a tolerant country, as long ago as 2004.

Here's one way of looking at it: Claire Balding, the well-known sports broadcaster, gave her own reasonable and not uncommon perspective as a gay person: 'As far as marriage is concerned, I'd like to marry for the verb. The "civilly partnered" phrase is a bit unwieldy. Otherwise I can't see it making any difference to us.'

If all the rights under law are the same for those in civil partnerships as for those in marriages, then why cannot the former simply say of themselves that they are married? It was an option recently portrayed in the story-line of *EastEnders*. Syed Masood was preparing for a civil partnership with his fiancé, Christian, and part of the scene-setting was the manner in which he insisted to all around him, with a mixture of charm and aggression, 'We are getting *married*,' until even Dot Cotton (the mad-Christian) and his semi-devout Muslim parents were happy to agree.

'Equal marriage'

So is there anything wrong with gay marriage? Any answer to that question is irrelevant, for what the Coalition Government is proposing has nothing to do with gay marriage, but rather the destruction of the existing civil institution of marriage. 'Equal marriage' is the new concoction.

Like it or not, the Coalition is determined to change the law. And there is not much time left. It announced the formal outline in March of last year and began a consultation process on some of the proposed detail.

Last December, it issued a *Government Response* to the responses it had received. There were some 228,000, and (perhaps surprisingly)

it claims that the majority were in favour of the proposed equal marriage, open to both opposite-sex and same-sex couples. One would expect any government to find the answers it was looking for, and it is no surprise that it does so. There is much propaganda fluff, but also some clues as to the proposed draft legislation, promised for late January.

Diverting attention

Firstly, there is an almost tedious (and certainly repetitive) emphasis on the safeguarding of religious

**the biggest concern
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of the institution of
marriage**

institutions that do not wish to participate in the new-style civil contract. Partly this is to divert attention from the actual specifics of the new contract, which seem very shaky. You may have read, for example, about their embarrassment over defining gay consummation, which they acknowledge to be legally impossible. They hope, therefore, to leave the resolution of this issue to judges, and to create a new distinction between consummable marriages and non-consummable marriages [9.10].

The more important reason for their over-emphasis is that they are unable to ensure such protection. They are proposing a 'quadruple lock' with as much legislative protection as they can possibly squeeze into the pot, but their naïve statement that full protection is 'already guaranteed under Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights' has not carried a great deal of conviction.

I think they want to provide protection, but since Parliament is no

longer sovereign over such matters, they can only state that the European Convention is on their side and hope for the best. Again, it sounds genuine when they say 'no-one should face successful legal action for hate speech or discrimination if they preach their belief that marriage should be only between a man and a woman' [4.6], but the history of the past few years suggests that this will be impossible to ensure.

Commitment

The biggest concern, however, still remains the (almost unconscious) dismantling of the institution of marriage. Much is made of the notion of 'commitment', but nothing is said about what this commitment is. We must wait for the actual legislation, but at the moment, on the basis of this document, it seems like an expression of private hopes and intentions rather than a solemn and binding vow.

Consider the rather obscure question of how same-sex couples would be allowed to convert their civil partnership into a marriage: 'We will enable couples to have a ceremony upon conversion should they wish to do so. The ceremony would have no legal effect and would be similar to existing ceremonies allowing couples to renew their vows' [6.13].

The implication of this is that the words have no power; they do nothing. If a couple want them and mean them, that's fine, but they do not create the marriage (as they do in a church wedding) for they are not strictly necessary, the 'ceremony' being merely optional.

More will have been published by the time this article appears. So I concentrate here on two main points. This legislation is not about gay marriage, but about changing the existing institution of marriage. And secondly, it seems to be removing the power of the word from the bond between man and woman. Both are serious. **ND**

devotional

Fasting is more than abstinence from food St John Chrysostom

I speak not, indeed, of such a fast as most persons keep, but of real fasting; not merely an abstinence from meats; but from sins too... Fasting is a medicine; but a medicine, though it be never so profitable, becomes frequently useless owing to the unskilfulness of him who employs it. For it is necessary to know, moreover, the time when it should be applied, and the requisite quantity of it; and the temperament of body that admits it; and the nature of the country, and the season of the year; and the corresponding diet; as well as various other particulars; any of which, if one overlooks, he will mar all the rest that have been named.

Now if, when the body needs healing, such exactness is required on our part, much more ought we, when our care is about the soul, and we seek to heal the distempers of the mind, to look, and to search into every particular with the utmost accuracy...

Abstaining from sin

For the honour of fasting consists not in abstinence from food, but in withdrawing from sinful practices; since he who limits his fasting only to an abstinence from meats, is one who especially disparages it. Dost thou fast? Give me proof of it by thy works! Is it said by what kind of works? If thou seest a poor man, take pity on him! If thou seest an enemy,

be reconciled to him! If thou seest a friend gaining honour, envy him not! If thou seest a handsome woman, pass her by! For let not the mouth only fast, but also the eye, and the ear, and the feet, and the hands, and all the members of our bodies. Let the hands fast, by being pure from degradation and avarice. Let the feet fast, by ceasing from running to the unlawful spectacles.

Let the eyes fast, being taught never to fix themselves rudely upon handsome countenances, or to busy themselves with strange beauties. For looking is the food of the eyes, but if this be such as is unlawful or forbidden, it mars the fast; and upsets the whole safety of the soul; but if it be lawful and safe, it adorns fasting. For it would be among things the most absurd to abstain from lawful food because of the fast, but with the eyes to touch even what is forbidden. Dost thou not eat flesh? Feed not upon lasciviousness by means of the eyes. Let the ear fast also. The fasting of the ear consists in refusing to receive evil speakings and calumnies. 'Thou shalt not receive a false report,' it says.

Speak ill of no one

Let the mouth too fast from disgraceful speeches and railing. For what doth it profit if we abstain from poultry and fish; and yet bite and devour our brethren? The evil speaker eateth the flesh of his brother, and biteth the body of his neighbour.

And in the meanwhile I desire to fix three precepts in your mind, to the end that you may accomplish me these during: the fast, viz., to speak ill of no one; to hold no one for an enemy; and to expel from the mouth altogether the evil custom of oaths.

Thoughts from St John Chrysostom on Fasting, Homily 3, Vol. IX, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, edited by Arthur Middleton **ND**

I have been asked on several occasions by individuals who have come to a place of repentance on their life's journey 'what about all the damage I have done through my sinfulness – the evil I have done and the good that I have not done?' Is it possible for God's grace to in some way reclaim the past and to reconcile historic hurts?

This awareness of the consequences of our actions is in itself part of the experience of repentance and therefore it must be a work of the Holy Spirit. No one comes to a true knowledge of their sins unless the Lord reveals it to them.

In responding to these deeply felt and painful anxieties the Ghostly Counsellor must encourage deep reflection on the saving work of God in Christ. There is surely no limit on the healing love of God when it is liberated to work by penitence and true faith. We must always remember that it is the Lord's will to 'make all things new'. The pronouncement of absolution is the declaration that God's grace can 'wipe

Ghostly Counsel

Deliverance from sin

Andy Hawes is Warden of Edenham Regional Retreat House

clean' and 'deliver' us from all our sins. This grace of deliverance must include the consequences of our sinfulness. If our rebellion against God can bring hurt to others, our penitence and experience of forgiveness can also bring healing.

We must remember that in the Apostles Creed we confess that 'He descended into Hell'. St Peter tells us in 2 Peter 3.18ff, 'For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,

through whom he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah.'

This understanding of the eternal reach of God's reconciling love is also expressed by St Paul in writing to the Romans; in chapter 8 he reflects on life in the Spirit and on the basis of his meditation on the love of Christ, which he is convinced makes us 'more than conquerors in all things', he concludes, 'we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him'.

I cannot believe when I am with someone feeling the full weight of their sinfulness, and living with the 'grievous memory' of their wrongdoing, that the love of Christ does not truly and effectively 'deliver' them from their sins.

This deliverance must involve some unsearchable way of bringing healing and hope to those who innocently suffer the consequences of someone else's wrongdoing.

A Conservative Evangelical responds to Bishop Steven Croft

Julian Mann on the Bishop's statement on women's ordination in his address to Sheffield Diocesan Synod

Because of its clear articulation of the liberal evangelical theological approach, the Bishop of Sheffield's statement on women's ordination in his presidential address to his diocesan synod requires a considered conservative evangelical response. The meeting of Sheffield Diocesan Synod was on the Saturday after the failure of the women bishops measure in the General Synod on Tuesday 20 November. Dr Steven Croft's statement is therefore significant as an immediate reaction from a prominent supporter of the measure and a member of the Archbishops' Council.

It is important to emphasize that our bishop has, under God, introduced many positive spiritual initiatives in our diocese since his consecration in 2009. In his address, he articulated very clearly the equality of men and women both in creation and salvation. Any thoughtful conservative evangelical should and would wholeheartedly agree with Dr Croft's theological position in this regard. The Bible is clear that men and women have equal value as human creatures made in the image of God.

Narrative of equality

Where we would diverge is on his view that there is a dominant biblical narrative of equality that should be set over against New Testament texts that speak of male headship. We would see no dissonance between these two biblical strands. Heterosexual complementarity, reflecting in humanity the spiritual relationship within God the Trinity, is for us the unifying biblical concept. Dr Croft argued: 'St Paul stands firmly within the main biblical narrative (of male-female equality) when he declares in Galatians: 'As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves in Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no

longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3.27–28).'

Two variant traditions?

He then addressed what he perceives as the minor, divergent biblical theme: 'It is true that a small number of, mainly later, passages give a contrary view and seem to prohibit women from speaking or being in authority. But those very passages are evidence

in the Galatians text Paul is addressing the issue of equality in salvation between men and women

for the practice they were trying to suppress. They stand outside the main flow of scripture. They need to be read carefully.

The seeds and signs of equality between men and women in ministry are present and affirmed in the scriptures. 'All interpretations of scripture on the question of women in ministry have to account for these two variant traditions in the New Testament. Which should we take as our guide today? Should we follow the dominant tradition and direction of scripture which affirms equality and partnership in ministry as in the rest of life or the minority tradition in which the ancient Church was accommodating to its culture, we can only assume for the sake of the greater good of the proclamation of the gospel.

'The Church of England has determined for some years that the majority reading is the right one for our times and, indeed, is our adopting it is overdue. That is especially the case because in our culture it is essential to affirm equality and partnership in leadership and ministry for the sake of

the greater good of the proclamation of the gospel as the response to the Synod decision has made very clear. 'This scriptural understanding of the equality of women and men lies right at the heart of the women's rights movement worldwide historically and in the present day. The early suffragettes took part of their inspiration from the Bible. It is a vital part of the Christian witness not only in this country but across the globe in relief and development.'

Differences not removed

Three points need to be made in response to Dr Croft's hermeneutical approach. First, in the Galatians text cited by Dr Croft the Apostle Paul is addressing the issue of equality in salvation between men and women, not the created differences between the sexes, which are manifestly not eliminated in the New Testament age. Women with wombs, not men without wombs, remain the child-bearers AD as they were BC.

In the context of Paul's refutation of the circumcision lobby in the Galatian churches, it was not his intention to suggest that intrinsic natural differences between the sexes are removed by the gospel of justification by faith that he proclaimed. Given that such natural differences are not eliminated, it is entirely consistent to hold that the differences of God-given role between the sexes in the Church and in the family are not eliminated either.

Date of texts

Secondly, the texts that teach male headship are not late. 1 Corinthians was written from Ephesus in the first half of the 50s AD. 1 Timothy, which articulates male headship very clearly and roots its perspective in God's creation rather than in human culture, was written in the first half of the 60s AD, prior to the Neronian persecution.

It was therefore written earlier than Mark's Gospel. Besides, the New Testament nowhere states that the late texts within its Canon have less authority than the earlier ones. Mark's Gospel is no less authoritative and Holy Spirit-inspired for being later than 1 Timothy.

It is to be hoped that the Bishop of Sheffield does not hold the view that 1 Timothy is a pseudepigraphic second-century AD document. The view that important New Testament documents are essentially forgeries undermines the authority of the Canon of Holy Scripture, which Church of England bishops according to the Ordinal are called to uphold.

Contrary to Article 20

Thirdly, the view of a dominant narrative, superseding supposedly later texts, would appear to run counter to Article 20 of the Church of England's Thirty-nine Articles of Religion. Article 20 states very clearly that whilst the Church 'hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies and authority in Controversies of Faith', it is not 'lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of scripture, that it be repugnant to another.'

The serious canonical question arises here: does positing an earlier dominant theme that drowns out a supposedly divergent later strand of teaching contravene the hermeneutical approach set out in Article 20? If so – and I would respectfully submit that it does – then the hermeneutic justifying

women's ordination is unanglican.

Dr Croft's warning shot to conservative evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics also calls for a response: 'Even if the Church of England could reach agreement on such (legal) provision (for opponents of women bishops), there is another factor. Parliament has become deeply involved in this debate. For the first time in history on Thursday the Speaker allowed an emergency question to the Second Estates Commissioner. 24 MP's spoke. Not one had a good word to say about the decision taken by the General

we should also thank God for his grace in the counter-cultural courage of such women

Synod. Any legal provisions in the Measure will have to pass through Parliament.

I therefore believe that this next period will continue to be an extremely difficult one for those opposed to women as priests and bishops. The alliance between conservative evangelicals opposed to women's headship and anglo-catholics opposed to the ordination of women will be subject to significant scrutiny.

I expect these two very different theological positions will attract increased attention and criticism. Before Tuesday's vote, these two positions had not been much examined and tested in public debate. They were simply respected as minority views

held in good conscience. However they now, sadly, have much greater importance and will be subject to much closer scrutiny.'

More teaching posts

One is inclined to respond to this word of episcopal warning to our two constituencies with a question. Given that women's ordination to the presbyterate and soon to the episcopacy is a culturally-conditioned innovation in the national Church at a time of numerical decline, what have Anglicans who hold to the traditional teaching to fear from such 'scrutiny' of their biblical convictions? Conservative evangelicals should heed the call by Mrs Karen Soole, chair of the Northern Women's Convention, in January's *Evangelicals Now* that there must be paid posts in our churches for gifted women to teach the Bible to other women.

Because of the biblical imperative for older women to teach younger women, as expressed for example in Paul's epistle to Titus, our churches must provide more full-time teaching posts for women such as Mrs Soole, who should be paid the same as male Bible teachers. We should also thank God for his grace in the counter-cultural courage of such women, which makes it considerably easier for us conservative evangelical men in pastoral ministry to uphold the apostolic teaching on headship. Without the likes of Mrs Soole and Mrs Susie Leafe of the Proper Provision movement, our task would be much harder. **ND**

The heart's discovery

Peter CSWG on the crucial role of prayer in our relationship with God

Prayer is the heart's discovery
of truth, of what man is, shall be
and what he can become
when he makes answer to God's call,
to do God's will,
to glorify His Name,
to be the living image of eternal Love
that all be brought to glory.

Prayer is the heart's discovery
of truth, of what man is, shall be
and what he can become.
Making answer to God's call.

he gives himself to be
the reconciliation
to Love's unity.

Fr Gilbert Shaw 1886–1967

Prayer is much greater than we think, and certainly profounder and more varied than we can imagine. Perhaps we tend at first to think of it as one more activity 'to do' 'if we have time', but prayer is more than activity. It is much more than how we perhaps first experience it communally, whether participating in a liturgical office, joining in a Rosary group, saying the Jesus Prayer, or just reciting the psalms or some prayers of the saints.

Fr Gilbert Shaw in his poem above calls it a 'discovery,' the 'heart's discovery,' for it is an exploration of truth and of life. This is because it is first of all a relationship, our relationship with the Origin and Source of our being.

Exploration

At this present moment, that Source whom we call 'God' may still seem for most of us a somewhat remote Being, not really well-known at all. Spiritual realities can certainly seem distant from the pressing urgency of life as we experience it with e-mails and the internet and modern technology.

However, we know from the Lord's own words that our poor prayer is called to progress and grow into a relationship with the Father: that we are to share and grow into *his* relationship with his Father: we are already instructed to call him *Abba*, 'Father' (even 'Daddy') in anticipation of that full appropriation. It is the Holy Spirit who gives this relationship, who puts the word 'Abba' 'Father' on to our lips.

Prayer is already beginning to take on a different complexion, from that of spiritual activity into one of relationship and movement and growth: a journey.

The Lord's Presence

One key factor in this change or transition for all coming from a strong eucharistic background will be kneeling/sitting in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Simply to be in his Presence elicits a powerful sense of prayer where we lose any sense of 'doing' an activity, and become more conscious of participating in a relationship with the Hidden Lord. It is the experience of the Curé d'Ars: 'He looks at me, and I look at him.' Nothing else. Awareness of his Presence within that setting helps us to see him present in all things.

If, at the beginning of the practice of prayer, we were conscious of difficulties: distractions, finding something to say, or words to say it, or just 'nothing,' St Paul comes to help our struggles to pray with encouraging words, and to point us to that deeper relationship and meaning of prayer, in which God himself, the Holy Spirit, takes the initiative.

'For we do not even know how to pray' but 'the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness' and through our inarticulate groans, the Spirit himself is pleading for us and God who searches our inmost being knows what the Spirit means, because he pleads for God's own people in God's own way' (Romans 8.26–28).

Learning to be still

When the initiative is coming from God's side, our work changes. It is now one of learning to be still enough to attend to what he is doing in us or 'saying' to us. 'Saying' because although he does use human words clearly occasionally, there are diverse ways he can 'speak' and learning to 'listen' becomes an art.

It is why silence and stillness and solitude are critical qualities for the deepening of prayer. In this we realize God is far more in control than we think him to be and prayer is greater, more mysterious and profound, matching the depths of our being.

Prayer then is more than the time that we give to prayer. It has to be seen in a much wider context. It is *our whole relationship with God*, with life and with other people since the two can never be separated. Each has an immediate knock-on effect on the other.

A journey

This sense of 'prayer as a journey' (Enzo Bianchi) might be described as *a journey from the 'outside' to the 'inside' of things*, in common with all the activities in life where we begin on the 'outside' with rules and guidelines, and learning from those who know, until the activity becomes our own experience. In the same way, prayer can start as one activity among others but its goal is to progress and grow through the silence and stillness and solitude to a point where prayer pervades our whole being and life.

Fr Gilbert Shaw's poem *The Heart's Discovery* quoted above underlines this greater and wider purpose: in a nutshell, we are to *become prayer*. It is the truth of who we are, the 'children of God' (1 John 3.1–2), sons and daughters of the Heavenly Father.

That is the truth of our being, the reality of what is; and not just of our calling in the Church, but our calling as human beings, to realize full human maturity in Christ (Ephesians 1–3). We were made for prayer, for this relationship with the Father, and we are not complete until we live in it.

There are limitless depths ahead. St John of the Cross in his *Living Flame* speaks of the 'deep caverns' of

the Spirit, of the heart that dwells in the Spirit.

He compares it to an underground mine with limitless caverns and treasures: wealth, and riches to be discovered. They are the infinite depths of God and represent how we shall be for all eternity in relation to the Father, and to Jesus and His Holy Spirit.

Spiritual battles

We can see now why God in his wisdom has provided for his Church communities of prayer: visible icons of this charism, given from God to hold before all the centrality of this 'journey' everyone is invited to make. These are women and men, called by the Lord to pursue this work for no other reason than he wants it done.

A Church cannot survive the spiritual battles and onslaught of our spiritual enemy without these 'fortresses of prayer' (St Teresa of Avila), the monasteries and convents of the Church.

Fr William of Glasshampton called their occupants 'the chariots and horsemen, the warriors of God.' A monk or nun would smile at that. The battle language refers to what God achieves through the faithful witness of prayer, to how he confounds and weakens the enemy of the Church and of humankind.

All this holds out for people hope of what lies ahead: we are going somewhere and death is not stopping our journey or getting in the way. It is this joy and expectation that enables us to sacrifice and 'give ourselves' to 'put love in where love is not' (St John of the Cross) for the reconciliation and healing of the world. **ND**

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