

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

## Dividing the cake

John Richardson has a pertinent warning  
for the over-confident majority

*The Pilling Report on senior appointments and traditional catholics:*  
**It is difficult not to conclude that there is an element of unfair  
discrimination (whether conscious or unconscious) in the system**

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The next issue of **newdirections** is published on 3 August

**H**ow would you describe the senior appointments system in the Church of England? Nepotistic? Obsessively secretive? Resistant to incomers? Biased against minorities?

It was once the habit of 30Days in this paper to place alongside every new appointment the candidate's years of association with Robert Runcie. Aficionados were to be observed scurrying to their copies of *Crockford's* to prove us wrong. But now it's official: we were right. The system is all of those things and more. The recently published Pilling Report is another damning indictment.

This time a significant part of the report concentrates on the appointment of traditional catholics. It reveals that in the period since 1993 opponents of the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate have been effectively excluded from senior posts as deans, archdeacons and suffragan bishops.

This is all the more worrying since both the House of Bishops, in the Manchester document *Bonds of Peace*, and the General Synod, in the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod, instructed otherwise.

Both Bishops and Synod have been flagrantly ignored.

The Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993, in confirming earlier undertakings, states that 'Except as provided by the Measure and this Act no person or body shall discriminate against candidates either for ordination or for appointment to senior office in the Church of England on the grounds of their views or positions about the ordination of women to the priesthood.'

An Act of Synod is defined as 'the embodiment of the mind or will of the Church of England as expressed by the whole body of the Synod,' and this particular Act of Synod was passed by overwhelming majorities in all three Houses (Bishops: 39-0; Clergy: 175-12; Laity: 194-14).

The Manchester Group, seeking to draft legislation of permit women to become bishops, will also need to take note of Pilling. Any thought of provision for opponents by Codes of Practice and 'gentlemen's agreements' must now be set aside.

If an Act of Synod has so conspicuously failed to deliver, it is clear that nothing less will do and something more is inevitable.

But let the Report speak for itself:

**4.5.7** A willingness on the part of traditional catholic candidates to work with women clergy (while also safeguarding their own integrity with regard to the sacraments) is clearly essential if they are to be appointed to senior office. The small number of tradi-

tional catholics who have been appointed to senior office have, we believe, in general demonstrated such willingness. Such working together involves generosity on their part as it does on the part of the women priests with whom they work.

**4.5.8** We have no reason to believe that there are not priests of traditional catholic views with the necessary skills and experience, and the requisite positive attitude to working with women priests, to qualify them for senior appointment. Nor have we been made aware of other issues, comparable to those raised in the case of conservative evangelicals, that might make traditional catholics reluctant to accept one of the appointments under review. That being so, it is difficult not to conclude that there is an element of unfair discrimination (whether conscious or unconscious) in the system.

**4.5.9** It has been suggested to us that the small number of appointments of traditional catholics results from an unwillingness on the part of the majority of those (ordained and lay) who are consulted in most dioceses to accept the appointment of someone of traditional catholic opinion. But as long as those opinions may legitimately be held by Church of England clergy, such an unwillingness will need to be challenged. The Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod represented a solemn undertaking on the part of the Church of England as a whole to the minority who do not agree with the ordination of women to the priesthood. It is not for us to express a view as to whether that undertaking should continue, or what effect the ordination of women to the episcopate might have on it. We are clear, however, that as long as that undertaking does continue to be enshrined in an Act of Synod, those who make senior appointments (principally, though not exclusively, diocesan bishops) have an obligation positively to confront resistance to the appointment of members of the minority and ensure that such candidates receive fair and equal consideration. We recommend that efforts be made to persuade both those responsible for making appointments and those whom they consult that while the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod remains in force its prohibition of discrimination should be adhered to.

**4.5.10** We also recommend that bishops should be asked to indicate which (if any) of those currently on the List from their dioceses are 'traditional catholics'. Bishops should be asked positively to look for clergy from this constituency who might either be qualified for inclusion on the Preferment List or might be developed in such a way that they might be qualified later on. **ND**



# Grabbing the cake

**John P. Richardson** wonders whether those currently taking an uncompromising approach to the issue of women bishops may not be opening an unexpected new battle front elsewhere

the  
Evangelical  
model of  
the ministry  
begins  
from the  
assumption  
that what  
the minister  
can do, in  
principle,  
can be  
done by  
anyone

**T**he story is told of an officer in the First World War who, upon telling a private to send over a grenade into the trench opposite, received the not-unreasonable reply that this wouldn't be a good idea, on the grounds that it would only encourage the enemy to send one back – a lesson which might be borne in mind by those currently taking an uncompromising approach to the issue of women bishops.

Although it would be wrong to present the Church of England as a formal compromise of theologies (the 1552 *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Thirty-Nine Articles* were, after all, intended to be quite uncompromising), it is nevertheless true that the Church has accepted compromise in order to hold together those whose theologies, whilst at odds with one another, are nevertheless recognized as permissible within the bounds of the English Church.

In the nature of things, these compromises range from the unexceptionable to the somewhat dubious, but somewhere between these two extremes lie the arrangements regarding the ordination of women to the priesthood. To many – perhaps the majority – the practice is acceptable and causes no difficulties. To a few, however, it remains a serious bone of contention which demands, and has been granted, a 'structural' solution. Not everyone has been happy with this, but until now we have, as Rodney King famously urged us, just got along (albeit, *only* just).

The proposal to consecrate women bishops, however, has called this particular compromise into question. On the one hand, most of those using the system of Provincial Episcopal Visitors will no longer find it an acceptable arrangement and are seeking a more radical provision. There are others, however, who wish to take advantage of the new situation by rejecting any further arrangements whatsoever to satisfy those who can accept neither women bishops nor women priests.

One of the reasons for the latter's impatience with compromise is undoubtedly a sense that it can be got away with. Those it would most affect are perceived as a rump, mostly of Anglo-Catholics, many of whom (it is thought) would need only a nudge to send them into the arms of Rome, whilst the remainder can be allowed, quite literally, to die out. There is therefore a certain confidence in some quarters that pretty soon the whole cake will be theirs, with no further need to share even the odd slice with others.

What this overlooks, however, is the fact that the rejection of compromise, like the putative grenade, travels both ways. One's own insistence on getting one's own way may prompt (indeed may require) a similar insistence on the part of others. And this recognition is particularly important at present, since it seems to have been forgotten that the Church of England currently holds together not two but three models of the ministry.

The Catholic model will be entirely familiar to readers of *NEW DIRECTIONS*, and reflects in most respects the same understanding as is found in the Roman Church. The ordained ministry maintains the truth of the Gospel and the integrity of the Church by its very being, as well as through its functions of teaching, preaching and administering the sacraments. Those ordained into this ministry are qualitatively changed by that process, but – it is believed – by its nature it is only open to men.

Then there is the approach to the ministry which we might call the Institutional model. This is the model you will typically find adhered to by Diocesan Directors of Ordinands, Bishops' Selectors and, indeed, most of those involved in the selection and training of clergy. Significantly, it is also the model exemplified by the 1997 theological statement by the House of Bishops titled *Eucharistic Presidency*, written to address the issue of lay presidency raised by a Private Member's Motion at the General Synod.

This entire document is really a conclusion (to reject lay celebration) in search of an argument. However, the most decisive argument available, namely that laypeople are not priests in the sense that the Catholic wing of the Church of England understands the term, and therefore not merely should not but cannot celebrate Holy Communion, was unavailable for the obvious reason that an appeal to it would rule out other, hitherto accepted, views of ministry and sacrament and, moreover, might tend to endorse the Catholic view on other matters; for example, the ordination of women.

Nevertheless, like a parent who realizes that 'Because I say so' isn't going to cut much ice, the bishops knew an argument must be found. Unfortunately, the result was a justification through which one could drive several coaches and their accompanying horses.

Their defence was that the president at Communion should be a person with what they called 'overall pastoral oversight of the community', which they immediately equated with 'those ordained as bishop or priest/presbyter' [4.46]. This relied on the argument that Communion is not celebrated by an individual *empowered* to do so, but by the gathered community as a whole. The president thus acts (merely) as the community representative, but, by a cunning twist, only those episcopally ordained as its overseers may represent the community.

Thus what *Eucharistic Presidency* has is a 'Catholic' view of presidency – that it should only be celebrated by those ordained as priest/presbyter – without a 'Catholic' view of priesthood (or, indeed, Eucharist), based on a tenuous argument about roles within the local church. The 'priest', under this view, is not a layperson, but neither is he or she a priest in the way this was understood before the Reformation. Thus the statement suggests, 'At ordination a minister is set in a

distinctive relationship to the Church as a whole, and this is a permanent relationship, signified by the use of the traditional term *character*' [3.29].

Yet whilst the *term* is traditional, the understanding of it with the longest actual tradition, namely that ordination imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark, is noticeably absent – as it must be, since to suggest otherwise would be to undermine other aspects of the Institutional model and the compromise of theologies it seeks to maintain.

Clearly, however, *Eucharistic Presidency* was written to defend not against Anglo-Catholicism but against that other, third understanding of ministry found within the Anglican Church, namely the Evangelical, and it is this model which is currently being overlooked.

The Evangelical model of the ministry begins from the assumption that what the minister can do, in principle, can be done by anyone. The reason why the ordained minister does what he or she does is simply the one Annie Oakley gave to Frank Butler: 'Anything you can do, I can do better.' It is the understanding of different gifts in Romans 12.3–8 applied to the concept of ministerial orders, and it underlines the fundamental Evangelical view that ministry is about function. As the *Nottingham Statement* of the 1977 National Evangelical Anglican Congress, put it, 'Christianity is a one-caste religion: all Christians are equally called to minister to Christ in the world, and ministry must be seen as a calling for all, not a status for some' [J1].

According to this view, therefore, there is no one 'ministry' set apart from other 'ministries', nor is there any entitlement of one particular kind of minister to act in ways that other Christians cannot.

The Evangelical understanding thus takes a very different view of the 'priesthood of all believers' from the Institutional model. As *Eucharistic Presidency* puts it, the Institutional understanding of *this* priesthood is 'a corporate description, not an individual mandate' [5.6]. All believers together constitute the Church's 'priesthood', but no individual is thereby entitled to exercise any particular ministry. Evangelicals, however, would argue precisely that the priesthood of all believers is indeed a mandate to each individual, and that most especially with regard to spiritual matters. In this they would be following, albeit not necessarily consciously, the views of both Martin Luther and Thomas Cranmer.

In *Concerning the Ministry*, Luther wrote, 'we teach with the Word, we consecrate with the Word, we bind and absolve sins by the Word, we baptize with the Word, we sacrifice with the Word, we judge all things by the Word. Therefore when we grant the Word to anyone, we cannot deny anything to him pertaining to the exercise of his priesthood' [LW 40.21].

More significantly for Anglicans, Cranmer affirmed that, 'if it befotuned a prince christian-learned to conquer certain dominions of infidels, having none but temporal-learned men with him', God's law allowed them to 'preach and teach the word of God there' and also to 'make and constitute priests' [*Miscellaneous Writing and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, CUP 1864, p. 117].

Cranmer's opinion is particularly important since it is obviously hard to do with him what the Church of England usually does with troublemakers and suggest that, with those views, he would be more comfortable in another denomination.

For many Evangelicals, therefore, lay presidency is entirely consistent with their theology of ministry, belonging in terms of skills (as they see it) with leading the prayers or reading the lesson, rather than preaching the sermon, and therefore being open to a wider range of congregation members (including women, as far as many conservative Evangelicals are concerned).

It should come as no surprise, therefore, to discover that, in some places in the Church of England, 'lay presidency' is already happening. Yet clearly it is happening quietly on a small scale, not loudly as part of a 'campaign for lay presidency'. And one of the reasons for this restraint is undoubtedly (though perhaps remarkably) a sensitivity towards the rest of the Church of England.

Certainly that seems to be the case with the Diocese of Sydney where, despite the Diocesan Synod giving approval to what they call 'lay administration', it has been on indefinite hold, not only under the old regime of Archbishop Harry Goodhew, but since the advent of Archbishop Peter Jensen – a man who some might have suggested would be in a hurry to push it through.

Nevertheless, Archbishop Jensen remains emphatically committed to the principle. Moreover, he makes the point that, whilst it should not be seen as 'payback' for the ordination of women, the latter has some bearing on Sydney's stance. He writes, 'The...relevance of the introduction of women to the priesthood is this: if you are going to argue against lay administration, it is now difficult to rely on an argument from the long tradition of the church and also from the ecumenical consequences of the innovation. Neither of these arguments prevented the ordination of women. In fact, whereas for many of us the ordination of women was forbidden by the word of scripture, the New Testament seems to be silent as to the question of who may administer the Lord's Supper.' [<http://your.sydneyanglicans.net/mindful>]

In England, however, there are some asking if there should be, if not payback, at least a *quid pro quo* regarding the Evangelical understanding of ministry.

As Peter Jensen hints, for conservative Evangelicals, lay celebration is as much a biblical mandate as male headship. Even so, there are reasons to urge caution within the English context. Too often, for example, lay celebration is used as a stick precisely to beat clericalism (and, indeed, Anglo-Catholicism generally), rather than being a proper expression of a rounded theology and ecclesiology. It may reasonably be suggested that until conservative Evangelicals can give a proper account of what is happening in Holy Communion (rather than what is not), they are hardly in a position to justify a change in who may preside over it.

Nevertheless, advocates of the so-called 'one clause' approach to the consecration of women bishops may, unwittingly, be about to open a second front. The current conservative Evangelical restraint about what they would perceive as a theological shibboleth depends in part on others also showing restraint. Yet as we know from the history of women's ordination, the way that change happens in the Church of England is not, first of all, through the legislative structures but through radical principled action. The radicalism is already there. The principled action will not be far behind. **ND**

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# Any volunteers?

*Julian Mann on reluctant churchwardens*

## Dear Archdeacon,

I agree that it is regrettable that there were no nominations for the post of churchwarden at our recent annual Vestry meeting of parishioners.

According to the *Handbook for Churchwardens & Parochial Church Councils*, Mowbray, 2001: 'The office of churchwarden is a venerable one, which had already emerged into legal recognition by the thirteenth century...[churchwardens] had in fact a twofold significance: they were both guardians of the parochial morals and trustees of the church's goods.'

I believe this is the first time in the history of Booty Bridge Parish Church that this venerable office has not been filled.

As we have previously discussed, we are one of the 82 parishes out of 175 in the diocese with fewer than 50 adults on a normal Sunday. Our numbers fell in the late 1980s, with the children situation becoming serious by the end of the 1990s – there were no children in the parish church on Christmas Day in 1999. Even Oliver Cromwell didn't manage

that! I suppose the chickens are coming home to roost in the Noughties. Church decline takes time to show through: so does church recovery.

If your annual Visitation at the cathedral is anything to go by, the age profile of the average churchwarden is 50–65, in this diocese at least. We have some folk in their 50s and 60s in our regular congregation, but they are fewer than those who are 70-plus. Those 50–65-year-olds we do have are heavily committed with looking after grandchildren while their daughters go to work. We have a smattering of folk in their 30s and early 40s who could potentially fulfil the role. To be honest, in a small church I wouldn't be asking them to do much – just to front it up.

Why aren't they coming forward? Low volunteerism in the culture has something to do with it. Folk these days are less likely to do owt for nowt. People are probably less committed to public service than previous generations. The role of churchwarden itself has less social status

than it used to.

But I wonder whether there is also another factor: what we are asking people to call themselves. I am a family man in my early 40s. I would like to think that, had I stayed in my previous calling as a journalist with my existing family responsibilities, I would be willing to take on the role in the circumstances our church faces.

I'd like to think I would volunteer. But I would certainly not look forward to the following conversation: 'I hear you've gone and volunteered to be warden down t' church. When did you start t' get this obsession with flower arranging? It must be all them dodgy vicars you're mixing with...'

For Generation Xers living in an age in which the network is eclipsing the institution, 'church rep' might be liveable with, but probably no longer 'churchwarden'. Isn't this something you can look at in the higher councils for the sake of our Lord Christ's mission?

Yours sincerely... **ND**

**F**or many people, attending church is not a happy experience! Although the call to worship the Divine is one that many respond to, they find that the church is full of people, and wherever there are people, there are problems! If into the pot-pourri of human peculiarities we add a mix of theological and liturgical differences, there are countless reasons for feathers to be ruffled and noses to be put out of joint. What follows is a practical response to some of the most frequent moans.

First, a hopeless priest! Speaking as a priest, I have to say that priests are universally hopeless. As soon as a man is ordained, he is doomed to fail. Priests are there as a constant reminder of God's grace and not as paragons of human virtue. The priest may be hopeless but it doesn't prevent the Lord from using him as a means of grace. If a relationship with a priest has broken down completely, there might be a good reason to worship elsewhere. But this is rare, and moving churches should always be a last resort.

Second, the worship/preaching/building etc. is not helpful. There are two responses to a general dissatisfaction with the experience of church. The first is to remember that the prime purpose

## Ghostly Counsel Unhappy churchgoing

*Andy Hawes is Warden of Edenham Regional Retreat House*

of worship is to give honour, praise and due service to God. This means that the subjective experience of God is secondary. The second is to ask this question of the complainant: 'What is your contribution to the worship?'

It is vital to grasp the truth that worship is not a consumer activity; worship is active participation in the work of the people of God. Hymns are meant to be sung, sermons meant to be listened to and prayers meant to be prayed. Coming to worship in a meanness of spirit will only lead to a negative experience.

Thirdly, other people – this can range from the man who sings loudly and out of tune, to the woman who wears noisy

jewellery, to the annoying children and their annoying parents. There are two ways to deal with this in a positive and gracious way. (The alternative is a growing resentment that damages the whole church community.) The first is to be thankful – the church community is the Body of Christ and it has been brought into being by him and bought with his precious blood.

Be thankful for all those in church – you are one with them by God's call. The second response is one of self-examination: what is it that irritates you? Reflect on this source of dissatisfaction within your heart. Ask for God's grace in it all, and let him use the problem to draw you closer to him. It is a sad truth that the people who moan the most pray the least!

It is important to have realistic expectations of churchgoing. Please do not expect attendance on a Sunday to meet all your spiritual needs. This is not its purpose. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity for corporate and personal affirmation; to play an active part in the building up of Christ's Body and to feed on him in his Body in the sacrament and in his word. Come to church thankful for the gifts of faith, freedom and health, and, being thankful, be generous to your Heavenly Father and to your brothers and sisters.

# The smiling father

After two years of Pope Benedict, **Joanna Bogle** identifies some of the striking features which have characterized his pontificate thus far and offers some explanations for his great popularity

**T**he eyes are kindly and smiling, the silver hair is neatly swept back, the face expresses simple, intent listening. He is leaning forward with eagerness: the conversation is engaging him completely. This is the kindly professor at work – the one whose lectures are so much more interesting than the others.

There was much discussion about Pope Benedict at his election, many confident assertions about what he would be like and what he would do. Now, over two years into his pontificate, we are finding out. He turns out to be, if naturally a shy man, also one who exudes openness and kindness, with an air of quiet purposefulness which establishes a sort of certainty and confidence.

## Surprising his critics

Pope Benedict is winning hearts and minds on a scale that has astonished his critics. The crowds in St Peter's Square are bigger than they have ever been – far exceeding the numbers that used to attend Pope John Paul's weekly Angelus gatherings. There were 50,000 people at his Palm Sunday Mass this year. The crowds at World Youth Day, with teenagers wading into the Rhine to greet him, praying with him in a massive candelit vigil on a summer night, and cheering him to the echo when he preached to them at morning Mass, look set to be outclassed by similar vast numbers in Sydney when he flies there next year for the 2008 event.

'The Church is alive, and the Church is young!' he told the world in his inaugural sermon – and the tone and style of his papacy thus far has echoed this, and given a renewed confidence to those who believe that there is indeed reason for hope as the Roman Catholic Church squares up to the challenges and possibilities of the twenty-first century.

## They come to listen

This is a man who is not, and never was, any sort of rottweiler. This is a priest who, as a *peritus* at the Second Vatican Council, worked hard to see the presentation of a Faith that had everything to offer a battered world demoralized by two World Wars. This is an academic with a passion for truth, a believer for whom an incarnate God is the turning-

point of history, giving us the fullness of truth about ourselves and our destiny.

I'll be honest: I hadn't read any of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's books and knew his name only because he headed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. I liked this idea: it seemed to me attractive to have something that guaranteed the 'brand name' and trustworthiness of what I was being given.

Why am I a Ratzinger fan? It's not as though he has the style that was part of John Paul, especially in the early years of his pontificate. No, this is a gentle retired

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**he is teaching the truth in a way that is dramatically appealing to people who are hungry for it**

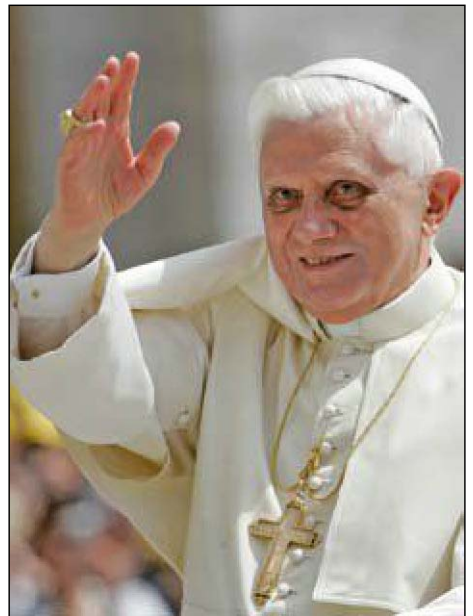
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academic, with a massive reputation for brain-power, author of some forty books, fond of cats and Mozart. Why is he so popular?

It is because he is teaching – and teaching effectively – the truth in a way that is dramatically appealing to people who are hungry for it. He is able to build on the superb drama and vividness that Pope John Paul brought to the Church. There's even a cliché doing the rounds about this in Rome: with Pope John Paul, people came to look; now with Benedict they have stayed to listen.

And they *are* listening. *Deus Caritas est*, his first encyclical, sold in its hundreds of thousands in its first couple of weeks. A new question-and-answer catechism based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (which of course he edited and produced as Cardinal Ratzinger) has proved a huge success.

He doesn't talk in soundbites but he does give us things that stay in the mind, and in the heart. Pope Benedict told young people at World Youth Day 2005 that they should search for the truth – and only the fullness of truth, in Jesus Christ, would really satisfy. He told Europe in 2007 that Europe was facing 'its twilight in history' because it was turning its back on the glories of the Christian faith and 'losing confidence in its future'. At Regensburg



he memorably challenged both Islam and the Western secular world to explore the interface between faith and reason, between the reality of a God who made an ordered and logical world, and man's intellectual response to that reality.

## No gimmicks

'He's easier to understand than Pope John Paul' is a comment frequently heard among Catholics. And it is true. John Paul could often be frankly obtuse, and even his easier works, like *Veritatis Splendor*, are not a simple read. Benedict, by contrast, for all his academic richness, can communicate simply.

Disappointments? Rumour says that right-wing American Catholics don't like his opposition to the Iraq war. Those who love traditional liturgy lap up his love of Latin and deep sense of liturgical tradition, but are unsettled by his ability to compromise, to be comfortable with groups such as *Communion and Liberation* or the charismatic movement. There are murmurs that, for all his commitment to orthodoxy and the beauty of his teachings, he is failing to appoint bishops who share these deep convictions and the ability to ensure they are taught in their dioceses.

Talking-points? Well, there is a new style about – and no, I don't mean red shoes and the reintroduction of the fur-trimmed cape and other more traditional paraphernalia, although these are indicative of an emphasis on the continuity of tradition. I mean in things like, for instance, the *Compendium of the new Catechism*, already mentioned, illustrated with glorious art from down the centuries, and bound in hardback with a pleasing cover, which is light years away from those dreary paperbacks with stick-men and gimmicky slogans. And the artwork was, it is said, chosen by Papa Benedict

personally to make exactly this point.

There's an absence of gimmicks. The annual pop concert was gently abandoned. Babies get hugged and blessed by the score in St Peter's Square, St Bernard dogs patted on an Alpine visit, formal visitors dazzled by a warm smile and ease of speech in a range of languages – but there'll be no on-stage encounters with Bob Dylan or tapping of feet to a rock-style band.

Benedict likes to emphasize simple, straightforward things that reconnect people with the idea of an unchanging and unchangeable doctrine and message that comes from the Apostles. One of his favourite examples is that of the martyrs of Abitene.

### Clarity in teaching

In a not untypical Papa Benedict approach, he takes a relatively obscure point and uses it to illustrate something important: these martyrs were arrested by the authorities under Diocletian because they had gathered on a Sunday to celebrate the Eucharist, in defiance of imperial orders. Despite torture and the threat of death, they would not renounce this weekly act of worship: 'Sine dominico non possumus' – 'We cannot live without Sunday.' And that cry, Benedict proclaims, is and must be ours too: 'The Sunday precept, therefore, is not a simple duty imposed from outside. To participate in the Sunday celebration and to be nourished by the Eucharistic bread is a need for a Christian, who in this way can find the necessary energy for the journey to be undertaken... A journey, moreover, that is not arbitrary; the way that God indicates through his law goes in the direction inscribed in the very essence of

man. To follow the way means man's own fulfillment; to lose it, is to lose himself.'

All this, and I haven't mentioned sex once: not homosexual unions, not abortion, not women priests. Well – the message on each of these is not merely that the Church will not change her teachings but that she cannot. In the case of the first two, since they touch on crucial human realities at the core of any civilized community life, Christian politicians must

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## he doesn't talk in sound bites but he does give us things that stay in the mind, and in the heart

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oppose them and never allow them to become entrenched in law or in common custom. And in the case of the last: it's non-negotiably evident that the Lord chose twelve men to be his Apostles, and the Church is bound by this and cannot, will not, and has no desire to change it.

### Firsthand experience

And social teachings? Poverty, war, the need for international aid in the face of natural or man-made disasters? The plight of exiles and of immigrants? A catty (and ignorant) correspondent to a feminist quarterly asked at the beginning of his pontificate if this was a man who had ever known hunger. The answer is yes. Like every other teenager in ruined Germany, and like his fellow-prisoners in the American-run camp, he went hungry. No alternative. The Americans were being as generous and decent as they could, but

the food wasn't there. Once it did become available, it had to be doled out in rations, and there wasn't much of it – but there was no point in complaining.

He does know about war – been there. Among Germany's dead, uniformed and civilian, were schoolfriends, colleagues and cousins. He knows a bit about how Christian social teachings can help rebuild a ruined land. He's got a few ideas about justice and fairness and people having to treat each other decently, including at the international level. Knows a bit about what it's like to live under a totalitarian regime. Knows a bit about what it's like to be part of a pariah nation and having to accept the consequences.

This is a Pope who is doing a lot of good. He's 80, and is on record as saying he doesn't think it will be a long papacy. Fortunately he comes from a family tradition of longevity, and looks in excellent health.

No natural right-winger – his family were deeply anti-Nazi, probably vaguely monarchist in their essential loyalties, instinctively traditional, definitely on the side of the poor. He's no politician – never wanted to be anything other than a priest. He's no fool, and he's no dreamer either: he's perfectly well aware of what can be achieved and what can't. The Church won't massively revive in Europe in his pontificate, but he'll help it to survive and he can try to give it dedicated priests, enthusiastic young people, a restoration of beauty in its liturgy and a confidence in its moral and doctrinal teachings.

This is a good man, and he's a good successor to Peter at this time. We are fortunate to have him. There's work to be done, and Benedict must do it. Keep him in your prayers. **ND**

## To the point

**A** lady in my congregation objects to the use of incense. Her latest tactic is to say that the new legislation which will ban smoking in bars will also apply to incense in churches. Is she right? And what does the law have to say about decisions which a parish priest may wish to make about liturgy? Do I need the PCC's agreement if, for example, I wish to celebrate Mass facing east rather than west, or west rather than east?

**T**he burning of incense is not within the definition of smoking in the new legislation ('smoking tobacco or anything which contains tobacco, or smoking any other substance') and so its use is not prohibited by it. Whether or not incense is

used and how it is used is a matter for the parish priest, since he has the control of all ceremonial (i.e. gestures or acts in the liturgy) as distinct from the rite (i.e. the words used). So you would not need the PCC's agreement to face east or west as this is a ceremonial matter. However, if such a change necessitated moving an altar or other furniture a faculty might be required.

You may not change the form of vesture without ascertaining, by consultation with the PCC, that such a change would be acceptable. This applies to all officiating ministers, so it is not in order for a visiting priest, covering for you during your holiday, to decide that he will wear surplice and stole when the established custom of the parish is to wear alb, stole

## V Liturgical tinkering

and chasuble.

As regards the rite used, the Canons provide that decisions as to forms of service are to be taken jointly between the priest and the PCC. They go on to say what happens when there is disagreement between priest and PCC. But once the rite has been decided, the priest alone decides which alternatives within the rite are to be used. So, for example, if it is decided that *Common Worship Order One* is to be used it is the priest who decides which eucharistic prayer will be used on any particular occasion. The PCC may make requests or suggestions, but it cannot direct him or her.

*Our lawyers are happy to answer reader's questions about church law – please email [tothepoint@forwardfaith.com](mailto:tothepoint@forwardfaith.com)*

# For a free diocese

*Bishop Edwin Barnes puts forward what may be the simplest of all the options for a structural solution for orthodox Anglicans to keep everybody happy and not frighten the liberal ascendancy*

Clergy and others have been responding generously to my request for help in making proposals on the Governance of our future province. Some proposals have been modest, others more sweeping; but none has struck me as so comprehensive and simple as that from Fr Lawrence MacLean, our man in Florence. Since what he proposed needs a little fleshing out and explanation, please do not hold against him anything that follows; the brilliant idea is his, the pedestrian details are mine.

Whenever we try to explain a 'free province' or a 'third province' to those in the liberal ascendancy, difficulties are at once asserted. You cannot have overlapping jurisdictions in the Church of England, they will say. The diocesan bishop will never relinquish any of his power to another bishop, they insist.

## Parallel episcopates

Well, there is a diocese of the Church of England where parallel episcopates not only exist, but are celebrated. It is called the Diocese of Europe. The bishop of the Lusitanian Church, based in Lisbon, introduces himself saying, 'I am the Bishop of Portugal'. We are in full communion with him and his church. Similar rather more realistic churches exist elsewhere through Europe. Who can fail to know that we are in communion through the Porvoo agreement with most of the Scandinavian Lutheran churches? They have bishops with ancient sees, and seem to find no difficulty in surviving, despite the existence of our Bishop in Europe.

More remarkable still, there is the Convocation of American Churches in Europe. Under their bishop, Pierre Welté Whalon, they are fully a part of TEC (the Episcopal Church, whose presiding bishop is the Most Revd Dr Katharine Jefferts Schori). The Convocation, it says, is 'a multinational, multiracial, multilingual and multicultural communion within the European Union – a mirror image of the multinational, multiracial, multilingual and multicultural Episcopal Church in the USA.' No doubt Bishop Geoffrey Rowell, Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe, would claim something similar for his diocese – though in this case relating to England and the Archbishop of Canterbury. So within the Anglican Communion there is at least one diocese which is perfectly happy to co-exist with another Anglican diocese.

## Boundaries

Then what about the cure of souls? 'Receive this cure, which is both mine and yours' says the diocesan on licensing a new priest in charge. It sounds grand, and harks back to the time of the first Elizabeth, when there were penalties for non-attendance at church, and the priest claimed the right to enter any home in his parish. The bishops might not yet realize it, but it is not like this any more.

In theory, England is a place where every person has a parish church and a parish priest to care for him, and every parish church is bound to a diocese. Yet many bishops happily encourage clergy to 'plant' churches in neighbouring parishes, whether the priest there is content for this to happen or not. So if clergy

are forced to concede the rights of other priests to minister across parish boundaries, surely in justice the same should be the case for bishops? The whole notion of parish boundaries is fast disappearing. Why then such a fuss about diocesan boundaries?

## The solution

So, what of the diminution of the power of a diocesan bishop when another bishop cares for priests in his diocese? The greater part of that power was conceded with the Act of Synod; the Provincial Episcopal Visitor has the pastoral and sacramental care of those who want it. What remains is mere legalism; and in any case, when bishops start claiming power over their clergy we cannot help remembering Jesus' retort to Pilate, 'You would have no power unless it had been given to you.'

In short, there is a perfect solution for a free diocese already in existence. It is for parishes in England which have asked for extended episcopal care to have that care administered by the Bishop in Europe. The Diocese in Europe would become an entirely orthodox diocese; and, without moving any buildings or altering any boundaries, liberal clergy and congregations in Europe could ask for the oversight of the Bishop of the Convocation of American Churches.

Instead of having to find friendly African or Southern Cone bishops to care for them, orthodox parishes and dioceses in the USA could associate themselves with the Bishop in Europe. He, no doubt, would make provision for them by appointing if necessary bishops who would work with him in caring for such congregations. He might also licence the English PEVs as Suffragans of Europe; and what a happy solution it would be if the Bishop of Fulham were to be reunited with the bishop whose former title was Bishop of Fulham and Gibraltar.

Such a development would fit our Anglican ethos ideally. Reformation, not revolution. No great new organization; the Diocese of Europe already has its seats on General Synod, and its relations with the other English dioceses, besides being on good terms with Protestants, Catholics and Orthodox throughout Europe. Best of all, the enlarged diocese would be understood perfectly by the Catholic hierarchy in Rome.

Our talk of 'free provinces' has frightened our fellow Anglicans at home, who think a province too grandiose, and has confused our Catholic friends on the continent. A diocese is a better solution; since a diocese constitutes, for the Catholic Church, a 'particular church'. Such a church would be capable of entering into conversations with other churches, whilst retaining the highest possible degree of fellowship with others in the Anglican Communion. In mathematics, the simplest solution is called an elegant solution. Dare we hope that our Church will think this an elegant solution to the present predicament? **ND**

*An earlier article of mine in NEW DIRECTIONS, about dual membership of churches, has drawn a good deal of comment, most of it favourable. It would be a great help to those of us working on the question of Governance, if readers could send suggestions by email or letter to me. Little think-tanks can dream up great solutions; but any solutions have to be workable.*

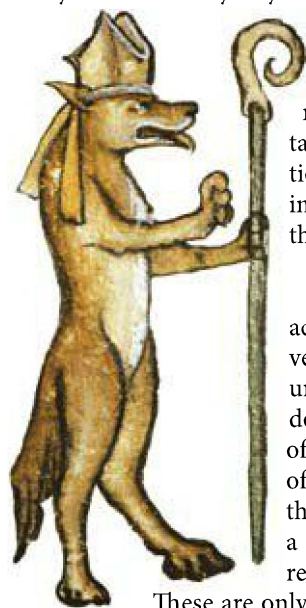
# Friendly beasts

**Anthony Saville** has been entranced by a new book of medieval pictures of animals, real and imaginary

Once one has acquired the basic historical understanding of those distant centuries, is there any merit in the Middle Ages? I have to confess that the more bishops and politicians urge me to be modern, the more I am inclined to see wisdom in the old.

My fascination with the Middle Ages is its extraordinary difference, lived out in large part within the actual building where I worship week by week. When I enter a building that has hardly been altered in five hundred years, I am more than ready to feel respect for those who built it and for their society.

This may be a rather pompous introduction to a lovely book, that you must surely buy for someone as a Christmas present, called simply *Beasts*. Put together from the Getty Museum in California (for whom no doubt the medieval culture is yet more distant), it is the most enjoyable collection of pictures of animals, real and imaginary, from the medieval period, that I have encountered.



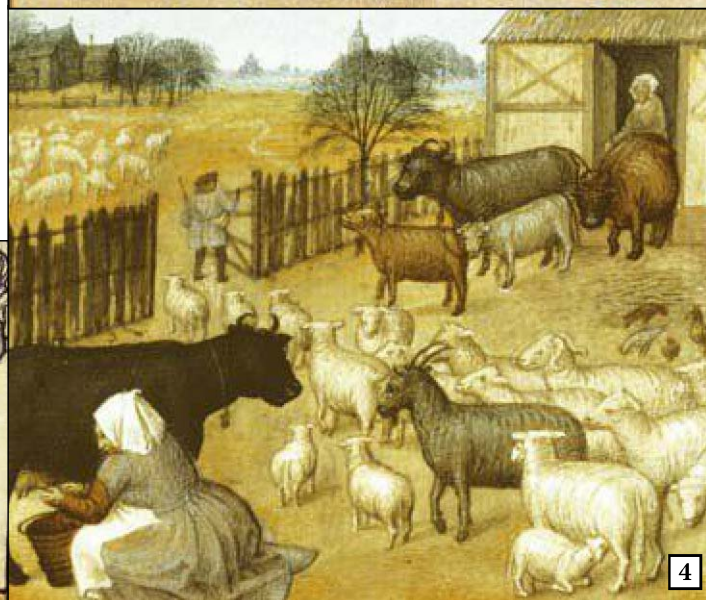
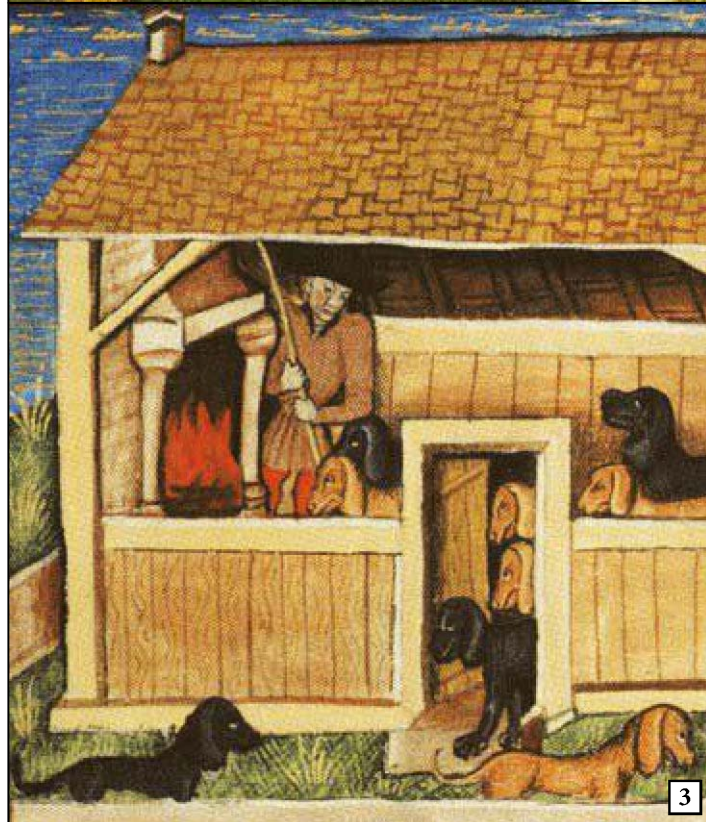
What struck me first was how accurate so many of these (generally very small) paintings are, and how unexpectedly healthy and robust the domesticated animals are. There is often a gentle humour and intrusions of sentimentality, but on the whole there is a healthy realism and (to use a modern word) a proper degree of respect.

These are only contemporary pictures, often marginal to the text itself; this is not a scholarly thesis; and yet the book as a whole conveys strongly a shared sense of what binds us in creation, a community of life and order manifestly different to the aggressive proclamation of animal rights of our own day.

Do not turn to this collection in search of intellectual enlightenment: just sheer enjoyment. These are the animals that fed and fascinated, charmed and frightened our forefathers.

**BEASTS** by Elizabeth Morrison;  
British Library, £12.95 hardback

The Beasts: 1: The Lamb of God, in the form of a medieval knight, decapitates his foes – from a 13th c. Spanish Apocalypse; 2: On the fifth day of creation; 3: A huntsman looking after his hounds (note the open fire) – 15th c. French; 4: A Flemish farm scene; 5: The sheep and the goats and their keepers – 13th c. French.



# devotional

## Intercession and holiness Prof. Raymond Chapman

Intercession raises more questions than any other aspect of prayer. Although the idea of asking or supplication is the root meaning of the word 'prayer' itself, some spiritual writers have regarded it as inferior to praise, thanksgiving and penitence. Yet Scripture has many instances of intercessory prayer, including the precept and example of our Lord himself.

The awkward questions are mostly about 'results' – was the prayer 'answered', has there been a positive effect, are we trying to change the Will of God? Informed Christians know that not getting exactly what one wants does not mean that God is indifferent. Intercession offers our hopes and fears within his wisdom, not a specific asking but rather the holding up of a need.

Private intercession is not directed only outward; it can also be a means of grace and deeper charity. This is the view of William Law (1686–1761), who was deprived on refusing the Oath of Allegiance to George I and became a nonjuror. In his *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1728) he takes a high view of intercession:

'A frequent intercession with God, earnestly beseeching him to forgive the sins of all mankind, to bless them with his providence, enlighten them with his Spirit, and bring them to everlasting happiness, is the divinest exercise that the heart of man can be engaged in.'

Intercession is not commended only as concerned with the welfare of others. It is part of the quest for holiness, an Anglican

tradition which today is in danger of being lost in the mist of vague 'spirituality':

'Be daily, therefore, on your knees, in a solemn deliberate performance of this devotion, praying for others in such forms, with such length, importunity, and earnestness, as you use for yourself; and you will find all little ill-natured passions die away, your heart grow great and generous, delighting in the common happiness of others, as you used only to delight in your own.'

But intercession must not become introspective and concerned only with its effect on the one who prays. Law also looks to the practical results. Through sincere intercession we shall grow in charity, and desire the good of others:

'He that daily prays to God, that all men may be happy in Heaven, takes the likeliest way to make him wish for, and delight in their happiness on earth. And it is hardly possible for you to beseech and entreat God to make any one happy in the highest enjoyments of his glory to all eternity, and yet be troubled to see him enjoy the much smaller gifts of God in this short and low state of human life. [. . .] When therefore you have once habituated your heart to a serious performance of this holy intercession, you have done a great deal to render it incapable of spite and envy, and to make it naturally delight in the happiness of all mankind.'

Whether in the Prayer for the Church Militant or the free intercessions of modern liturgies, the general and the particular are united in faith: 'This is the natural effect of a general intercession for all mankind. But the greatest benefits of it are then received, when it descends to such particular instances as our state and condition in life more particularly require of us.'

Let us offer our personal intercessions in confidence, trusting that they are accepted and perfected through Christ, our great Intercessor. **ND**



'Of course, I told him that we'd appoint more traditionalists if they didn't disagree with us.'

## A lot's in a name

'Do you think we'd improve our fortunes if we called ourselves Howell-Edwards?' A question from my lovely new wife, formerly Margaret Howell, as we travelled from church after our mid-1960's wedding.

Her concern was possibly prompted because the bridal car was a funeral car. Fair play, it was spring with less call for undertakers. Also, the undertaker owed me for sending him customers in my part-time job as verger in the Battersea parish immortalized by Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction*.

'No, we'll stick to Edwards – think of the extra ink we'd use writing a double-barrelled name.' Forty-plus years of failure suggest that she was right. Could Ian Fleming's 007 have portrayed toughness if instead of rapping 'Bond, James Bond,' he'd said, 'Bottomley, Marmaduke Bottomley?' Whereas Billy Wycherley could only be a believable 1960's rock'n'roller by changing his name to Billy Fury. Mick Jagger didn't need re-naming: his genuine surname conveyed the raw menace of the Rolling Stones. Sometimes all that's needed for success is a slight change. When Anthony Blair ditched Anthony for Tony, a regular kind of guy emerged.

The ecclesiastical world reinforces the thesis. Think of the care with which a young monk or nun selects their name in religion, seeking to share the virtues of the saint whose name they adopt.

Could Joseph Leycester Lyne have been a dour Prot rather than a flamboyant A-C, relaunching himself as Fr Ignatius? The equally eccentric Fr Brian Brindley added Dominic and Titus to his forenames, complementing his monsignor's hat. *Loose Canon* may have been the view of his biographers, but the Reading Romanizer had a firm grip on the image projected by names.

Having written up these thoughts, I called Margaret. 'Think I've cracked it. My thesis on names could be a best-seller. Serialization rights from *News of the World* or even *NEW DIRECTIONS*.

Her response was immediate. 'Knox' – at least that's what it sounded like. Yes, blast. John and Ronnie. Same name – very different chaps. Scrap thesis.

Alan Edwards

# Psychoanalysing Jesus

*Psychologists cannot hope to analyse the self-consciousness of Jesus*

**Patrick Henry Reardon** is a Senior Editor of *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*

**J**esus, as he appears in the gospels, resists man's efforts to comprehend him. There is a sense in which this is true of all human beings, but in the singular case of Jesus this resistance to interpretation is marked in a unique way. The 'who' of Jesus, which he pointedly put in question form, remains utterly elusive apart from a special revelation [Matt. 16.15–17].

With respect to other men, we have at least some chance of understanding them 'from within,' by recourse to what epistemologists call the principle of inter-subjectivity. That is to say, psychologists commence with the assumption of the common structure of self-awareness in all human souls. Each of us goes inside himself and finds a 'self,' nor does the experience differ essentially from person to person.

Thus, no one attempts to convince me of anything, except by first supposing that his consciousness and mine share an identical shape. No matter how separate we are, we have at least this much in common, that we can be self-conscious in the same way. Hence, no matter how individual the two of us remain, another person is able to enter into his own soul, examine his own experience, and gain some idea of what is going on in *my* soul.

Biography works on this basis, and so does a great deal of contemporary biblical scholarship. Exegetes of this persuasion seek to understand Jesus by recourse to the same sorts of internal information used to interpret other individuals in history. Psychology provides a foundation for exegesis.

## Modern interpretations

These scholars to explain Jesus in various ways, depending on what influences they think made Jesus tick. Observing his compassion, for instance, they perceive in his soul the impact of the social prophets of the eighth century. Or, taking note of the marked apocalyptic element in Jesus' preaching, they explain this as part of the general apocalyptic atmosphere of first-century Judaism. And so on.

Moreover, they justify these psycho-biographical efforts by appealing to the testimony that Jesus 'increased in wisdom' [Luke

2.52]. That is to say, the soul of Jesus grew and matured like the soul of any other human being. Therefore, his 'self' can be analysed like that of any other person. Those who take this approach believe that the doctrine of the Incarnation is ample warrant for analysing the soul, the subjectivity, the self-consciousness, of Jesus.

Nonetheless, these modern efforts to interpret Jesus through the analogy of subjectivity are problematic at best. The reason is simply this: the 'subject' in the subjectivity of Jesus is the eternal Son of God. According to the established theology of the Hypostatic Union, there is no human person in Jesus distinct from the Divine Person. The soul of Jesus, his *psyche* that these historians want to analyse and interpret, is the human soul of the eternal Son. The saddened subject that weeps at the tomb of Lazarus is God. The weary person who sits at the well and sleeps in the fishing boat is the Creator of the universe.

What is there in Jesus that renders him so impossible to analyse? He tells us: 'I and the Father are one.' Again, 'All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father.' The identity of the man Jesus is rooted in this eternal relationship of the Son to the Father. Self-awareness in Jesus is the consciousness of his eternal relationship to the Father. He has no personal identity apart from that relationship.

## No analogy possible

Now I submit that there is nothing else in any human soul even remotely analogous, and this is the reason why psychoanalysis, based on the analogy of subjectivity, is an inadequate and even misleading path to the interpretation of Jesus.

Surely, Jesus' human awareness of this relationship to the Father grew and developed as he came 'of age.' Otherwise, it is not true that the Word became flesh. However, the lines of this conscious development in Jesus are impossible to trace, for the simple reason that there is nothing analogous to it inside our own consciousness, nothing within us that affords us a hint of what it means for a human being to be conscious of himself as God's eternal Son. **ND**

## Sacred vision

**T**he work of Major is often compared to that of his contemporary and fellow northerner, L.S. Lowry. But beyond circumstance of time and place and some shared elements of visual language, their paintings are altogether different. Unlike Lowry, Major's work is infused with a deeply spiritual vision of the area around Wigan which is simultaneously exuberant and melancholic; joyful and yet bittersweet.

In *Crucifixion at Wigan*, our first impression is of the bleak landscape of a grey northern industrial town. Several elongated telegraph poles rise above the lakeside where bowed men in thick coats make their way through the mist. Then we realise that the foremost pole is in fact Christ's crucifix. His suffering on the Cross



© Mary Major

## Crucifixion at Wigan

is transposed above an admittedly depressing but otherwise mundane scene of everyday life in an industrial town. This is a painting of poignant duality. Christ is shown as a simple black silhouette and there is no graphic portrayal of his physical

agony, but still we are reminded of his shared human suffering, reflected in that of the hunched men below and the grey emptiness of their surroundings. At the same time the men seem unaware of the emblem of salvation above them through which their suffering is eclipsed and redeemed. In this bleak image we are reminded of the very human desolation and despair of Christ's sacrifice and perhaps strangely comforted.

Rosie Razzall

# The seeds take root

**George Austin** continues to trace the relationship between Church and State and shows how politics has influenced appointments through the centuries

**T**he seeds of the present situation in Church/State relations in England took root in its earliest days, with the Church's growth and its very existence depending first on the kings of the various provinces in the country; and secondly on the result of the deliberations of the Synod of Whitby, making ecclesiastical Rome in the person of the Pope to be the supreme authority rather than the more independent Celtic church.

It was to create future difficulty, both in the relations between the English Church and Rome and between the Church and the monarchy, and was to be the source of conflict and divided loyalties, both personal and national. In the latter half of the twelfth century, the archbishops of York and Canterbury each met an untimely end.

William Fitzherbert had been chaplain to King Stephen and his appointment to York in 1143 was in effect as the king's nominee, to the fury of canons at the Minster and not least of Osbert de Baines, archdeacon of York. Osbert appealed to Rome on the grounds that William was no more than the king's pawn and William was deposed. With a new pope eventually elected and the accession of a new king, Henry II, William was restored to York in 1154, only to die suspiciously a few months later. Was he really given a poisoned chalice by his archdeacon? Probably not, but it is a good story.

The conflict between Henry II and Archbishop Becket of Canterbury resulted from Becket's firm and courageous stand against the king's attempt to remove the right of clergy to be tried in ecclesiastical rather than civil courts, which Becket saw as an attack by the state on the proper rights of the Church. He had little support from the bishops, perhaps because of their reluctance to risk challenging the King.

Conflicts between Church and State reached a climax in the reign of King John, and in 1208 his foolishness resulted in Pope Innocent III issuing an interdict closing all the churches. The king used it as a means of seizing ecclesiastical property, but lost his battles with the powerful pope. The signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 was the culmination of attempts to curb the power of the throne, and significantly its first clause declared that 'the English Church shall be free.'

But not entirely free, for the Pope had the power to intervene in disputed episcopal elections, and when Henry VIII declared himself to be 'Supreme Head on earth' of the Church in England, this not only marked the end of papal authority in England but was also one of a series of actions by Henry against the power of the Church and the privileges of the clergy.

From this point the Church of England was without any doubt the established church of this land, firmly under state control. In the eighteenth century,

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**it was unlikely that any clergyman who did not support the Whig interest would ever be thought suitable for preferment**

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it was Edmund Burke who expressed one conception of the church's place in the scheme of things when he declared that 'politics and pulpit are terms that have little agreement. No sound ought to be heard in church but the healing voice of Christian charity.'

Even so, in that same century it was unlikely that any clergyman who did not support – indeed, did not devote himself to promoting – the Whig interest would ever be thought suitable for preferment, and ambitious clergy knew how to play their cards right, preaching the right kind of sermons, publishing the right kind of pamphlets and making the right kind of contacts. Nothing changes much and we can all recall firm opponents of the ordination of women who experienced sudden conversions on the road to a Damascene purple. And of course that would happen in the Church, established or not.

By the end of the eighteenth century, with such a corrupt and corrupting system of preferment, the number of outstanding men in the Church inevitably grew less, and there was a general complacency that it should be so.

In the nineteenth century it was no better, and Tory clergy became uneasy at the appointments made by Whig Prime Ministers. Prime Minister Melbourne did attempt to appoint Whig clergymen who

would nevertheless command the respect of the Tory clergy. His enquiries were once described thus: 'Is he a good man?' 'An excellent man: an accomplished theologian, an exemplary clergyman and much beloved by his people.' 'But is he a good man and a good Whig? Will he support the Irish Corporation Bill?'

The Tory Robert Peel had sufficient support in the House of Lords not to need the political support of the clergy so that he was able to raise Church patronage above party politics. But he would not appoint those following the high-churchery of the Puseyite Oxford Movement while raising many of the evangelical party.

The effect was not as intended: Puseyites were appointed to serve in the parishes of the poor and dispossessed and some suffered persecution and imprisonment for their views, advancing their cause more effectively in the end than if their leaders had become bishops. This should give cause for comfort and hope for the future to orthodox Catholics of today's Church of England.

Meanwhile, gaining the Prime Minister's patronage did no good to the evangelicals, who were often mocked. One commentator pointed out that it 'lifted them from the pulpit or school where they offered words of life and buttoned them in a pillory of gaiters.'

In the late twentieth century, there were many who would have echoed the words of Edmund Burke about politics and pulpit, and woe betide a country parson who declared himself to be a Labour voter or against foxhunting. It was assumed that since the Church of England was 'the Tory party at prayer' so then the clergy were naturally Conservative voters, with the clergy only 'mixing politics and religion' if they supported another party.

The inevitable result mirrored that of the eighteenth century, with the quality of the bench of bishops as leaders or even contributors of thought severely depleted, with only the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster and the Chief Rabbi seemingly able to express an independent comment from a religious angle on major moral issues of the day.

But could two new archbishops in the twenty-first century from outside the Establishment be a sign of hope for the future? **ND**

## Multicultural

Many thanks to St Stephen's House alumnus A.N. Wilson, writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, for the news that the Heritage Lottery Fund folk have decreed that, in order for grant-funding to be made available, a proposed staging of the York Mystery Plays in 2008, 2010 and 2012, using local students, will have to be 'multicultural'. 30DAYS' advice to York City Council is to consult Fr George Austin, the retired Archdeacon of York, who is bound to have some words of wisdom for them on the subject.

Of course, the Lottery people are only trying to show that they are right up to the minute, just like The Episcopal Church. News reaches us from across the pond of the Revd Dr Ann Holmes Redding, an Episcopal priest and theologian who has become a practising Muslim. Redding's bishop, the Rt Revd Vincent Warner, says he accepts Redding as an Episcopal priest and a Muslim, and that he finds the interfaith possibilities exciting. Her announcement hasn't caused much controversy yet, he said. Well, it wouldn't, would it? Not in The Episcopal Church (*sic*).



## Oops!

More sad news from York, where the Archbishop's Principal Adviser (yes, it really is a job – *Crockford's* says so!), the Revd Dr Emma Loveridge, has stepped down after only 13 months in post. The reason, reportedly, is that she is pregnant – a cause for rejoicing in most circumstances.

Unfortunately, she had failed to take the most obvious precaution by getting married first. According to the *Daily Mail*, her job involved keeping 'a finger on the pulse of day-to-day and wider issues faced by Dr Sentamu.' Still, it's nice to think that she will have plenty of time on her hands to concentrate on the issue she faces.



## Non-job

Meanwhile, in the Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real (honestly), they have just elected a new bishop. Did they opt for the Revd David Breuer, ordained for 32 years? Of course not. Perhaps they

went for the Revd John Palarine, with his 34 years in orders? No way. The Revds Paige Blair and Gale Davis Morris, 11 year and 18 years ordained respectively, didn't make it either – perhaps voters were unsure of their gender, although evidently Paige really is a girl's name in the land of the free.

So who topped the poll, with a stunning 13 years in Holy Orders? Step forward the Venerable Mary Gray-Reeves, currently 'Archdeacon for Deployment' in the Diocese of Southeast Florida. A Google search seems to suggest that she is the only such Archdeacon anywhere in the Anglican Communion, but presumably it is only a matter of time before the Diocese of Southwark has one, to keep the other six archdeacons on their toes!



## Archdeacon for textiles

Talking of archdeacons, sighs of relief have been heard in the Diocese of Oxford, where the announcement has recently been made that the new Archdeacon of Buckingham is to be Canon Karen Gorham, currently Priest-in-charge of St Paul's, Maidstone.

On paper, the news that their new Archdeacon was a published author seemed encouraging, until it was discovered that her claim to literary fame was as co-author of a Grove Booklet, *Naturism and Christianity: Are They Compatible?* Traditionalists of all shades can rest easy, though. The new archdeacon will not be causing more raised eyebrows than necessary, for although she was brought up in a naturist household, she does not practise it herself.



## Money for old rope

Recent correspondence in NEW DIRECTIONS about the necessity of paying the parish quota comes to mind as 30DAYS reads a recent press release from the CofE about the launch of the latest generation of its 'pioneering' worship planning software, *Visual Liturgy Live*. In an attempt to ensure that all and sundry bag it up without undue delay (a snip at £125), the *Authorised Lay Ministry Coordinator for Administrators* for the Diocese of Ely, one Peter Maxwell, waxes lyrical about how 'intuitive and effective' the software is.

And it gets better: retired clergy may get a discount if they buy it. 'Retired clergy who wish to take advantage of our discount should contact Church House Publishing on 020 7898 1451 and choose option 3 from the menu or click the link to send an email.'

A retired bishop of our acquaintance waspishly observed 'I am sure in view of our reducing pensions that there are many like me who will know just what to do with this generous offer.' Quite. Especially when every penny is needed in order to support one's parish, so that it can ensure long and rewarding employment for all those key diocesan personnel.



## Meanwhile...

Still in Ely, many congratulations to the diocese on being likely to hold the first kangaroo court under the new 'pastoral breakdown' provisions. The victim is the Revd Tom Ambrose, Vicar of Trumpington. The offence he gave to his parishioners by putting the harvest supper back a day and removing four pews to provide space for after-service coffee was naturally great, but when he suggested adding loos for the ageing congregation it was all too much.

The good Christian folk of Trumpington alleged pastoral breakdown, and lawyers have said Fr Ambrose's legal fees alone (to be paid by the diocese) could be as high as £150,000, while the tribunal and subsequent appeals could cost another £500,000.

How fortunate the Diocese of Ely is to have PCCs so willing to cough up the parish quota! On top of this, of course, if he is dismissed it might be possible for him to claim compensation under civil law, either for stress caused by the parishioners or for constructive dismissal by the diocese.

Any fool could see that this sort of action would be the inevitable result of the introduction of such proceedings, so one can only assume that at last synodical lunatics really have now taken over the asylum.

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# The God we trust

**Simon Heans** examines Rowan Williams' latest book, *Tokens of Trust*, and disagrees with his assertion that Christian faith begins as a general belief in the existence of God

For many years I had to teach two periods of General Divinity, defined as 'theology for non-specialists', to sixth formers. Rowan Williams' most recent book, *Tokens of Trust*, started life as six talks about the Creeds given at Canterbury Cathedral during Holy Week 2005 to a mixed audience, some of whom, as he tells us in the introduction, were 'regular churchgoers' and others who 'were fairly new to it all'. So here we have theology for non-specialists, the Archbishop's General Divinity lesson. But Dr Williams proposes for our consideration another, more important, sense in which this is a work of general divinity: 'I shall be suggesting that Christianity asks you to trust the God it talks about before it asks you to sign up to the complete system.' So according to Dr Williams, Christianity is first of all a *general* belief in God ('trust') before it is specific doctrine such as the Creeds contain.

## General divinity

We might see here an echo of the older sort of general divinity which recommended that catechesis should begin with arguments for believing God to exist before moving on to the credal propositions about him. But the question of God's existence does not really interest Dr Williams. He writes disarmingly: 'You won't be surprised to hear that I haven't found the decisive new argument that will prove once and for all that there really is a God.' And he seems to regard the traditional arguments for the existence of God as not much better than themes for the school debating society: 'When people argue against the existence of God, it helps to have some points you can make to counter the idea that belief is just completely irrational.' But according to Dr Williams, they do not go to the real issue, which is trust in God.

He is right when he remarks that 'the number of people who come to a living personal faith as a result of argument is actually rather small.' But that criticism would seem to apply to *Tokens of Trust* since it is towards the 'God who can be trusted' that Dr Williams wants to argue his reader. Traditional general divinity was aimed at demonstrating the *existence* of God and said nothing about his attributes. This was not something that divines in the older Christian tradition

believed their general arguments about God could settle. Their 'living personal faith' was not general, but specific. It was in the God specified by the articles of the Creeds.

Their position was really the opposite of Dr Williams': it was 'the complete system' in which trust was to be placed. There was, properly speaking, no faith in God outside it because the Creeds defined what it meant to have faith. In contrast, Dr Williams wants to persuade us that it is possible to speak in general terms about faith in God. My argument here is that Dr Williams' account of God as One

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Who Can Be Trusted rather than as He Who Is (the title of one of Eric Mascall's books of traditional general divinity) is deficient both logically and exegetically.

## Maker of heaven and earth

'We can trust the maker of heaven and earth,' writes Dr Williams, 'precisely because he is the maker of heaven and earth.' From looking at the world around us, we can conclude that 'God is to be trusted as a loving parent.' He is unselfishly concerned for the welfare of his creatures: 'The love that God shows in making the world...has no shadow of self-directed purpose in it; it is entirely and unreservedly given for our sake.'

But of course the difficulty with this position, as Dr Williams himself points out, is that accidents happen. Writing of the tsunami, he comments: 'Does this mean that God makes a *risky* world? Clearly yes, as we see it; anything that is less than God is exposed to risk.' But then can we continue to speak of God as 'a loving parent', the maker of a world 'entirely and unreservedly given for our sake'?

In fact, we soon find Dr Williams qualifying this claim on God's behalf. He tells us that we should not think of the world as made for us after all: 'Things in

the universe exist in relation to the Creator before they exist in relation to us, so that a degree of reverence and humility is appropriate when we approach anything in the created order.' We are also told that if it is to be a world at all then it has to be 'really different from him', but why does it have to be *so* different? Couldn't God make a world in which natural disasters did *not* happen?

Of course this is 'the problem of evil and suffering' which every essay in general divinity encounters sooner or later, and I am not blaming Dr Williams for not having solved it! But I am suggesting is that it is especially a problem for his thinking about God because he wants to make a general connection between 'the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth' and the idea of trust. In other words I agree with my sixth form sceptic in finding the sentence 'We can trust the maker of heaven and earth precisely because he is the maker of heaven and earth' to be a non sequitur. From the sheer existence of the universe, it does not follow that we can trust its maker.

Dr Williams seems to admit as much himself in drawing our attention to people – Etty Hillesum, a young Jewish writer who died in Auschwitz, and Job are mentioned by name – who 'right up against the worst of suffering find it possible to live honestly with God.' He quotes Job's 'If he kills me I shall still trust him', adding 'We can still hear people say something like it today; I don't think we can just ignore them.' I agree. But this is to say that we can trust God because Etty and Job think he is their maker, which is rather different from saying we can trust him because he is the maker of heaven and earth. The latter is a statement of general divinity while the former belongs to what we might call specific divinity, that of the Jewish people.

This tension between Dr Williams' general divinity and the Jewish kind emerges very clearly in what Dr Williams has to

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