

NEW•DIRECTIONS

Forward in Faith supports The Society in renewing the Church in its historic faith

February 2024

Church Mission

Robert Billing in Walsingham

Hassan Musa in Africa

George Bush on Cheapside



Sacred Living

Funeral theology

Pilgrimage in Chichester

Benedict XVI and his legacy



Also this month

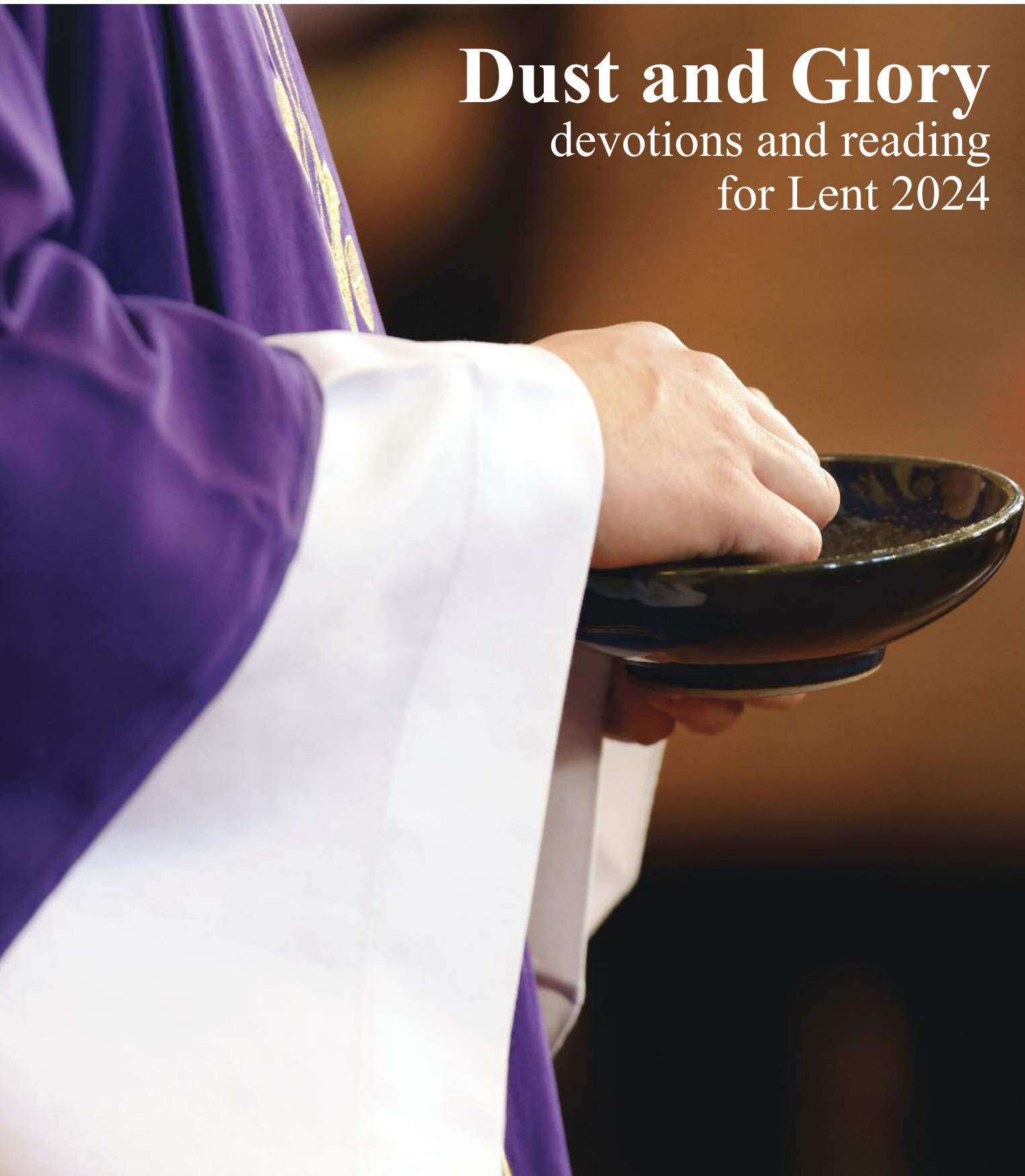
Fr Chislett remembered

General Synod update

The Post Office disaster

Dust and Glory

devotions and reading
for Lent 2024



◆ THE DIRECTOR'S CUT ◆

The Post Office has been prominent in our national media over recent weeks. You will have to have tried very hard indeed to avoid the story altogether. The treatment of postmasters and postmistresses, operating under contract, contains such a beguiling array of factors which the media, naturally, have been only too happy to explore in all their fascinating – and appalling – detail. They include issues of gross injustice, ‘managerialism’, incompetence, conspiracy, deceit, and so much else.

To that list we can add the role played by a former Post Office Chief Executive. This is because Paula Vennells is widely understood to have been one of a small number of candidates interviewed to become Bishop of London in the 2017 appointment process for that role. Not only that, but she is known to have led a review of the Church of England estate, and to have addressed a gathering of clergy aspiring to be the Church of England’s ‘leaders’ of tomorrow, as other pages in this month’s issue observe.

The ‘managerial’ word has cropped up time and again in the media coverage. There is a church angle to it too. Did Paula Vennells embody the new way of being church? Was it all part of the vision of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, for a better-managed Church of England? Should the church be run more like a business, shutting down local ‘operations’ which are not financially viable?

These are difficult questions and require some unpicking. Management can, of course, be beneficial, if carried out with wisdom, creativity and compassion. Similarly, bureaucracy is a loaded word and is often used in a derogatory sense. However, a well-run office, based on sound bureaucratic principles such as efficiency and proportionality, is a good thing and should be recognised as such. This applies as much to the Church as to any other institution or sector.

The charge levied at “managerialism” is that it involves an overreliance on, and an overconfidence in, managers and their notion of management. Thus, it has become an end in itself and that brings with it great danger. There is a parallel of sorts with the concept of ‘modernism’ in the Church, which prescribes adherence to the

prioritisation of the contemporary – and even the secular – at the expense of all else.

So, we should not hold up the human imperfections which lie at the heart of the reality of management to be something more than they are, to be something grounded in science. I also wonder whether there is a deeper issue to explore, beyond fads in management practice and jargon, which revolves around the egos of some of those involved and the repeated failure of the processes designed to keep the worst excesses of those egos in check.

In the secular world, this might involve an overly mighty senior manager with a lack of concern for the people on whom they trample. In a church context, we have witnessed the harm done in the period since the mid-point of the twentieth century by individuals with a proliferation of untested opinions and with the means and scope to put them into practice, often with destructive consequences.

We need to be continually reminded that the Church does not start from scratch each time an issue or controversy arises. Christian witness stretches back over two millennia. This has provided a substantial deposit of faith. That deposit of faith has developed – based on scripture and through revelation – and will continue to do so. As a result, we do not need to start afresh each time there is a new trend or what might seem to be a compelling voice. God’s covenant with us is deeper than that.

This is not to say that the Church’s foundations exist without tension or challenge. The juxtaposition of the papacies of Benedict and Francis have demonstrated that they most certainly do. It is perfectly reasonable to argue that, rather than illustrating that the weakness of the Church’s position, the contrasting approaches adopted by successive popes indicate a robustness and timelessness at the Church’s core. The Church survives and can even flourish amidst the noise within it and around it.

We may not be able to do much to reform the ways of the secular world. Its management fads will come and go, and they will tend to be self-serving in their nature. For ourselves, we would do well to recall the words of C.S. Lewis: ‘The Christian must wage endless war with the clamour of the ego as ego.’ **ND**

NEW◆DIRECTIONS

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Lent returns. Our coverage for the holy season of penitence, fasting and prayer includes Ash Wednesday's role (p5), and how soul-work can cleanse from sin (p6), and Lenten reading choices (p8). Elisabeth Angwin tours Chichester Cathedral with an artist's eye and finds much to meditate upon (p31). An early Yeats poem holds an image of retreat (p30).



Lives lived through grace are Christian witness to the world. Benedict XVI was one example (p10), as were the holy lives remembered in our obituaries this month (p34). Do it nationally, says Hassan Musa (p15); do it locally, explains Guy Jamieson (p16); and do it at the end, exhorts Andrew Greany (p18). Do it theologically, argues George Bush (p42); but don't ruin our institutions, pleads William Davage (p20).



Cover Image:

Ash Wednesday in France/Shutterstock

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

Almost but not quite

Adam Gaunt looks at where we are with LLF

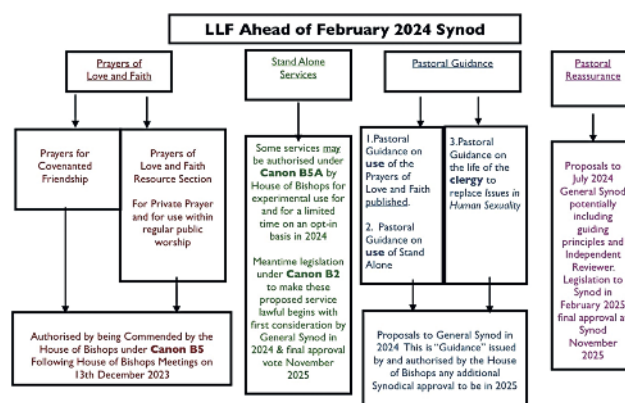
If you have been struggling to follow the twists-and-turns of the Church of England's debates and discussions around *Living in Love and Faith* (LLF) then don't worry, because you are very much not alone. The LLF process was never designed to be a direct journey traversing from point A to point B; it was always – by its very nature – going to be a meandering expedition, a journey of metaphorical mountain tops and of valleys deep. So, as we now approach the February group of General Synod sessions, let's reflect on where we are at the time of writing and what might happen next.

The first really crucial thing to remember is that LLF is a process, not an objective or a goal. In due course, and over the years of LLF, the process has produced four individual work streams, all of which are component parts of what we understand as LLF. The four streams are as follows:

1. Firstly, there are the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, which include prayers for covenanted friendship and prayers for use within the context of regular worship. These prayers are now authorised for use and are being used where that is deemed appropriate.
2. Secondly, there are the *Stand Alone Services*, that is, services of prayer and dedication that are complete within themselves and not part of a regular act of worship. These services are yet to be authorised and published alongside the necessary pastoral guidance, by the House of Bishops or with the authority of the General Synod.
3. Thirdly, there is the *Pastoral Guidance*, which itself is divided into three sections, namely:
 - (a) The pastoral guidance concerning the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith, which has been published alongside the Prayer of Love and Faith.
 - (b) The pastoral guidance for the Stand Alone Services, which is yet to be published.
 - (c) The pastoral guidance on the House of Bishops' expectations for clergy, ordinands, and seminarians, which will replace the *Issues in Human Sexuality* guidance document of the House of Bishops, published in 1991. As these elements belong to the House of Bishops of the General Synod, these new documents will be published and authorised under the authority of the House of Bishops.
4. Fourthly, there is a body of work connected with *Pastoral Reassurance and Settlement*. In a church deeply divided over the best route forward, and with General Synod votes on LLF being par-

ticularly close in the House of Laity, it is acknowledged that there will need to be a settlement between those who wish to fully implement all that the LLF process has to offer, and for those who, for reasons of conscience, see the results of LLF as contrary to the teaching and doctrine of the church as we have received it.

All these elements make up the journey which is LLF, and to help illustrate this further I hope readers may find the flow chart below as useful as I have in explaining visually where we are with LLF.



So what happens next?

Two new bishops have recently been appointed to lead the LLF process on behalf of the House of Bishops; they are Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley of Newcastle and Bishop Martyn Snow of Leicester. As new leaders they are already bringing a different dynamic to the process, and we look forward to hearing and seeing how their leadership will nuance the next stage of the LLF journey.

Once again, considerable synodical time has been allocated to LLF during February's group of sessions. It is likely that there will be a debate framed within a 'take note' debate, when General Synod will be asked to take note of a paper produced by the new lead bishops. We can't be certain as to what will be in this paper. However, it is likely that synod will receive an update on progress made in the four key areas of LLF, along with a reflection from the new lead bishops on how they would like to see LLF moving forward, and an early indication on what Pastoral Reassurance and Settlement may look like.

Whatever is presented, and whatever happens at the February General Synod, please keep all synod members in your prayers as we attempt to navigate the next stage. Please also remember to pray particularly for the Catholic Group in General Synod; it works incredibly hard to ensure our Catholic voice is heard and understood in General Synod and its environs. **[ND]**

Fr Adam Gaunt is Chair of the Catholic Group in General Synod.

X marks the Spot

Rebecca Swyer notes the collision of Ash Wednesday with St Valentine this year

Immediately after Boxing Day, supermarkets restocked their shelves with Easter eggs and Valentine's cards. Whilst they always do this swiftly, it was probably influenced by Easter being early in 2024, resulting in the unusual coinciding on 14 February of Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day (the latter being suppressed). Whilst this combination might seem paradoxical, it can deepen our understanding of Lent and the inseparable link between the cross and resurrection.

Nowadays, many Christians view Lent as akin to a stricter version of New Year's resolutions. Lent becomes a time for *giving up* things we enjoy, like chocolate and alcohol and *taking on* feelings of guilt about character flaws or when we've succumbed to chocolate. It isn't always linked to what a penitential season is about.

In the Early Church, Lent through to Easter was the primary period for Christian initiation. In Lent, candidates (known as catechumens) were immersed in deepening their understanding of the faith and preparing for what it meant to die to their old lives, using exercises and disciplines to help them leave behind unhealthy attachments and selfish behaviour. Then through immersion in the waters of baptism and accompanying rites of initiation at Easter, the new Christians sacramentally rose with Christ into new life. During Lent, notorious sinners also entered a process of counsel, repentance and assurance of forgiveness, culminating in a return to the full church community at Easter.

Lent and Easter should be part of *one* immersive experience, not only for new Christians, but all Christians who each year must deepen their understanding and experience of what it means to be called, sent and saved by Jesus Christ.

Christmas is fundamentally a joyful feast, which people love to celebrate. Easter is harder to 'sell', but is nevertheless a joyful feast about new life, with an abundance of chocolate! There's nothing wrong with services, songs and prayers that focus on praise and resurrection. But there's something wrong if the focus is *only* on praise and resurrection. Alongside happy times in our lives, we all experience pain, guilt, loss, times when things go wrong or we feel abandoned. In wider society and the world, we're immersed daily in the effects of war, famine, intransigence and cruelty human beings inflict on each other. This can seem overwhelming and we can feel helpless, affecting on health and wellbeing. When our hearts are full of negative emotions and we don't know what to do with, it can spill out in the way we live and relate to others.

Lent and Easter must be held together to speak into the reality of life and the reality of new life in Christ. The cross and resurrection are bound together and, through his mysterious saving actions, Christ defeated sin and even death so that we might have everlasting life. Whilst God

doesn't will us to suffer, he's there when we're suffering and nothing is wasted. The risen Christ still had the wounds of the cross, but transformed by the light of the resurrection.

If we remove Easter from Lent, the latter becomes a time of making us feel despair, misery and be inward-looking, focused on our mistakes and inadequacies. If we remove Lent from Easter, the latter becomes disconnected from the reality of life in past and present and from the reason why God became incarnate in Jesus Christ.

The juxtaposition of Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday is a helpful reminder about the power and cost of love. We sometimes trivialize love and say 'love you' casually and in a throwaway sense to people we hardly know. Valentine's cards often have an anonymous 'X' to indicate a secret admirer. Whereas ashes sprinkled on the head or body had been used widely before Christ as a sign of ritualized mourning or repentance, on Ash Wednesday the ashes mark a '+' on the forehead of the Christian, tracing over the indelible mark of the Christ's cross at baptism, a sign of God's extraordinary love and grace, transforming even the darkest parts of our soul. St. Valentine was, of course, martyred for love of Christ.

Our society has no real answer as to how human beings can cope with and process sin. Healthcare and therapeutic interventions are both God-given contributors to healing, but they can't heal the soul or remove the weight of sin. Participating in Lent is an important part of caring for our souls and processing the negative, destructive or painful dimensions to our lives. This ought to mean an increased time spent in prayer (silent as well as words), reading scripture (the psalms and gospels are particularly helpful with struggle and love), reading a devotional book, participating in a Lent course, engaging with practical ways of caring for the poor and marginalized. It could also include sacramental confession, where the sins that weigh us down are set aside, and the power of the resurrection and love of Christ can be felt at the very depths of our being, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

BCP evensong collect for peace

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed;
give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give;
that both, our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments,
and also that, by thee,
we being defended from the fear of our enemies
may pass our time in rest and quietness;
through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

ND

The Revd Canon Rebecca Swyer is Director for Apostolic Life in the Diocese of Chichester.

Scattering Sin's Darkness

John Twisleton looks to Lent

Let's put the light on!' It is dusk, we are absorbed in a book and unconsciously feel a strain upon the eyes as the text blurs from clear black on its white background. We become aware of this and act to change things. Thanks to electric light, the room's darkness is scattered and we can read on. This is a parable. Our lives grow dark through unconscious short-falls in love for God, neighbour, the environment or ourselves. Sometimes, even – Lord have mercy – through conscious acts. Scattering sin's darkness is beyond our capability and we need 'to turn the light on'. This occurs as we seek what Ephesians 2 verse 7 describes as 'the immeasurable riches of God's grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus'. In that light, there is light for our souls and we're equipped by the cross of Christ to dust away our sins like cobwebs that can be dusted once shown to us by the right sort of light.

Christians are confused about sin. They know in their hearts that sin is real but have minds besieged by arguments against that reality. Facing the reality of sin is impossible without God's loving insight given especially by the Bible. One of the most profound statements of sorrow for wrongdoing in scripture is found at the beginning of Psalm 51:

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

This Psalm is a cry for mercy from one woken up to and distressed by their sinfulness. Three words are used to express the source of guilt: 'Transgression' meaning a going across from those loyal to God to those who're in rebellion against him. 'Sin' meaning failing to do what we aim to do. Literally, the Hebrew word means the short-falling of an arrow before its target. 'Iniquity' meaning being crooked like a bent knife that can't be well used until straightened out. 'Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity' C.S. Lewis wrote to his friend Mary Neylen, encouraging her with her struggle against sin: 'No amount of falls will really undo us if we keep on picking ourselves up each time. We shall of course be very muddy and tattered children by the time we reach home. But the bathrooms are all ready, the towels put out, and the clean clothes are in the airing cupboard'. The psalmist is restless in his impurity because he knows better. He cannot wait to be washed clean from his sin and brought back to being upright before God.

Humility is truth. Before God, human beings stand

like pots before the potter. To imagine we are the source of our own lives is a delusion at the root of the sin of pride, highlighted at the start of Genesis as the root cause of our downfall. How better do we deal with pride than by cultivating the opposite quality of humility set forth in scripture as most honourable? Self-display is part of communication with God and neighbour but contains what spiritual writers warn us off, namely 'vain speaking'. Humility is a clothing of speech which flows from listening to and hence centring on others and flees from vain self-display as from the fire. It is a good practice to look back on and examine recent intimate conversations so as to identify how balanced they were in terms of our engagement with our companions.

When astronauts tread on the moon, they find themselves able to leap and jump with ease because gravity on the moon is a sixth of that on earth. If they went to visit Jupiter, they'd have to crawl on the surface so strong is the downward gravity. You and I get pulled down all the time. Our bodies, thankfully, get pulled down to stay on earth. But our spirits – they get pulled down by pride. They can feel really heavy. There is one gravitational field of the spirit drawing us humbly into love and there is another proud power dragging us down. As we struggle with our relationships, insecurities and spiritual emptiness, we find ourselves caught by the gravitational lure of pride as if in a quicksand. The more we struggle in our own strength to release ourselves, the deeper we go down. We need an upward pull from outside of ourselves. Jesus does that for us, if we give ourselves to him and receive his empowerment.

Jesus redefined sin – the breaking God's commandments – as failure in the several dimensions of love. Our Lord calls us to address our failure by coming to the Father of mercy, confessing our sins and seeking cooperation with his grace of forgiveness and healing. The discipline of self-examination, encouraged in the Lenten season, looks at our relationship with God, our neighbour, our environment and our self. It helps us to identify the negative attitudes that lie behind our sinful failure to love. Sometimes we see in such an examination, behind the strength of a judgemental attitude for example, a reluctance to judge or address within ourselves the very failing we are upset by in our neighbour. Giving God that failing within ourselves, confessing it and receiving his forgiveness, is discovered as a removal of the 'log' Christ says hinders our seeing things as they really are, as he sees them.

Thinking through the 'eco-friendliness' of Christian discipleship uncovers a number of weighty things to be balanced one with another: heaven with earth, dominion with stewardship, physical with spiritual, individual with collective, economic with political and belief with practice. In scattering sin's darkness we set about healing the

shortfall in our relationship to God, our neighbour, our environment and our self. 'Thankfulness is a soil in which pride does not easily grow,' wrote Archbishop Michael Ramsey. St Francis's eagerness to protect the worm on the path before him from being crushed by passers-by linked to the gratitude for all creatures he lived out. Our own thankfulness for the world around us is the best school for countering ecological sin and working with others to reverse the spoiling of humanity's common home.

Christians can get into a fix when they're invited to confess their sins. In church services there is usually no need to say aloud that you've distrusted God, spoken unkindly to others or held sordid thoughts in your mind. Some Christians have soul friends or confessors they share their sins with, seeking prayer for forgiveness. How do we gain courage to seek, own, confess and find the assurance of forgiveness we're promised by the Lord for our specific sins in the approach to Easter? Facing the reality of sin is impossible without God's loving insight, and openness to his love being poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord commands us to love our neighbour as our self, no more or less than that, which implies we are called to a right love of self

As a spiritual companion to a number of Christians, it seems to me that feeling unsuccessful in attempts to love God more often traces to our refusal to face up to how much and how deeply God loves us as individuals. This is a key shortfall in Christian life, darkness that needs scattering, as we open ourselves deep down to the Lord's light and love. 'Deep calls unto deep' we read in Psalm 42.7 and we can apply that to the deep love of God speaking into the depth of our hearts. Refusal to welcome the Holy Spirit into the depths of our soul is a recipe for inner darkness God wants brightening. The Holy Spirit has been sent to embrace the depths of our being in all its confusion, and to lead us into all truth; that includes his thoughts about me, his love for me. As we welcome that embrace, we find a place of rest where we no longer struggle with our view of self, where we can finally be ourselves in Christ. Once we are free to love ourselves – because we are so loved – there is joy and delight to just *be* your simple being.

Scripture affirms forgiveness, healing and deliverance as being in the heart of God whose power is able to overcome the power of sin, sickness and bondage. We cannot live in the world without experiencing these negatives, but the redeeming love of God has powerful positives that energise the Church's ministries of forgiveness, healing and deliverance. These ministries are linked, so that seeking forgiveness for habitual sins begs the question whether we should seek healing to tackle the source of our frailty. Similarly, our welcoming of God's deliverance from the things that bind us is linked to our fuller repentance and openness to

being made whole.

Scattering the darkness of sin is the work of God who is described in 2 Corinthians 4.6 as willing 'to shine in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'. As dynamite is ignited to release its potential energy into light, heat and momentum, so our faith ignites the radiance of Jesus to scatter the darkness of sin and light up our lives; and through us light up a world so desperately in need of that irradiation.

Postscript

*Throughout January 2024, I broadcast 'Scattering Sin's Darkness' – a four-part radio series on Premier Christian Radio – and have based this article on those programmes. I have been a regular contributor to the radio station for over 20 years. Premier reaches 1,200,000 listeners every week and it is a privilege to be part of the team. Premier is available via Freeview 725, via the Premier Plus App, nationally on DAB and on smart speakers. For listeners in Greater London, Surrey and north Sussex, it is additionally available on FM and AM radio. It can also be accessed at <https://www.premier.plus/ScatteringSinsDarkness> or the broadcasts section of Twisleton.co.uk. For Holy Week, I am preparing a daily broadcast series on 'The Power of the Cross'. **ND***



FORWARD IN FAITH NATIONAL FESTIVAL

Saturday 11 May 2024
St Alban the Martyr
Holborn EC1N 7RD

12pm Sung Mass of Eastertide
Preacher: Fr Kyle McNeil SSC
High quality choral music
Followed by a hot lunch with wine
2.15pm Meeting & presentations
3.30pm Benediction, finishing by 4pm

The National Festival is open to all Forward in Faith members
You are welcome to become a member and attend the Festival
The cost of attending the Festival is at a subsidised rate of £10

To register, please do so either electronically or by post,
stating either "individual member" or "corporate member"

Electronically: transfer £10 to sort code 30-98-97 &
account number 00384131, with your surname as a reference
& emailing admin.assistant@forwardinfaith.com
with your name, address & any dietary requirements

By post: send a cheque for £10 payable to Forward in Faith
at 5 St Andrew Street, London EC4A 3AF along with
your name, address & any dietary requirements

Deadline for registration: Friday 26 April

Lent Books 2024

Publishers still observe the holy season of Lent and are true to the age-old tradition of it being a time for study and ‘intentional’ reading. Both the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bloomsbury (which has taken on the Mowbray imprint) commission and release new titles each year. Thankfully, the overall crop is good for 2024 with something to suit most styles and approaches.

In **The Archbishop of Canterbury’s Lent Book 2024** *Tarry Awhile* (SPCK), Selina Stone has made a brilliant and enduring contribution to public theology. Much of the dialogue around racial justice can be shrill, ill-informed and politicised. Her book is none of those. She writes from a Black Pentecostalist background and offers a template for how other theologies can be understood and related to, whilst finding commonality and shared identity. Don’t be put off or tempted to place this book in any ‘Black Theology’ section. Of course it can do that, and speak to that experience, but it does a lot more and is considerably sophisticated in the handling of key themes and issues.

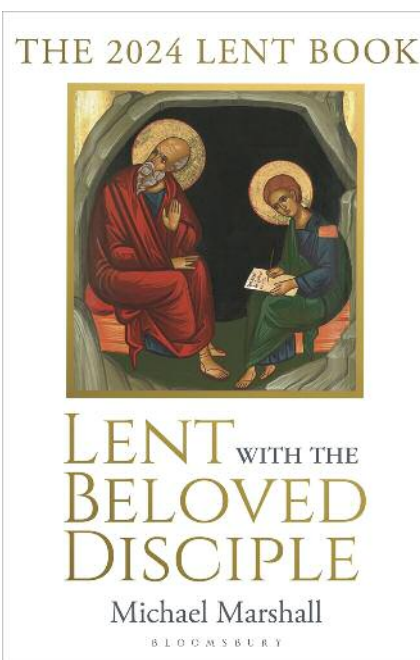
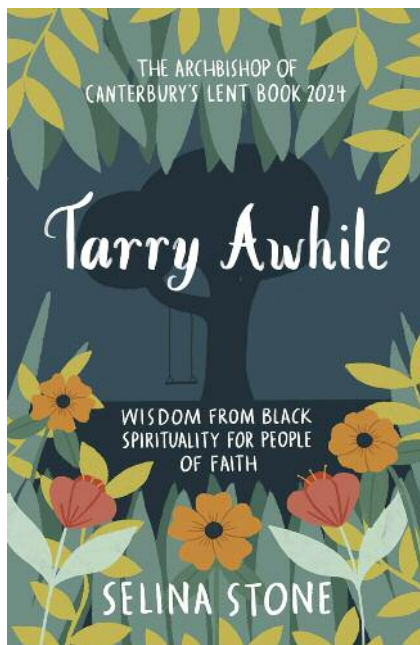
‘To be Black and British is to belong to multiple places’; in honest succinctness, Stone tells it as it is, without drama. She brings in multiple voices, many of them Black, sifting to find the quotes and viewpoints which matter and are worth knowing. There’s a welcome reminder that Tertullian, Athanasius, Augustine and Origen were theologians from Africa, but without having to make a point on any racial characteristics. She also writes with moving candour of her own biography: growing up in Handsworth, her grandfather’s faith, working at the Centre for Theology and Community, and a solo trip to Rome after her mother died. Personal testimony can sometimes jar; with Stone, this adds and doesn’t subtract.

A sense of common origin is thrillingly explored from the top through Genesis and our collective ancestry, and out of that what Blackness and darkness can mean – scripturally, spiritually, and skin-tonally. The next discussion, on dualism, looks at body and soul then progresses through African spirituality, whole-body worship, physical integration, and a consideration of incarnational theology.

This is existential stuff, yet not tortured or overwrought; her style is particularly accessible.

The natural segue way into eucharistic theology and the body of Christ is as helpful as it is assuring. Another section, on movement, build further with a look at migration, both voluntary and involuntary in the form of refugees. Elsewhere, Pentecost is linked to waiting, that of the disciples and we ourselves today. The chapter on Quiet brings in noise and contemplation, an what they can mean, including in prayer. The section on healing and sickness is profound. ‘Sometimes the feeling that God is inconsistent can be the most complex thing to get our heads around,’ she admits, and many will share her view. This is an excellent book for Lent, but it’s also for the shelf. Her scripture commentary is valuable, and the book’s overall insight is one to tarry with, both now and in the years to come. It’s a standout title and Dr Stone is a stimulating, companionable author.

The **Bloomsbury** title for this year is *Lent with the Beloved Disciple* by Michael Marshall. In six compact chapters, bookended with a prologue and epilogue, Bishop Marshall takes us through John’s Gospel (appropriately referring to it as the Fourth Gospel). A key theme in John is ‘abiding’ – not unlike tarrying – and there is much to be said for quiet time in this evangelist’s presence. Though it begins with John 13, the Farewell Discourse is less of a focus than the foot-washing and other main events that night, and so into the Triduum. It’s almost a Holy Week book but the reminder is that Lent points us towards Easter, and John is the one evangelist who has that idea from the beginning of his narrative. He locates the Cleansing of the Temple early on in his gospel whereas the Synoptics place it at the start of Holy Week. So a looking towards the light, and a constant reminder that it’s the resurrection light by which we see (to paraphrase C.S. Lewis). Marshall writes with charm (including expressions such as ‘banter’ between Jesus and Pilate) and a lifetime of experience. There is plenty of interest in this book and it will surely help preachers everywhere get through the season. It’s also an impressive achievement considering Bishop Michael turns 88



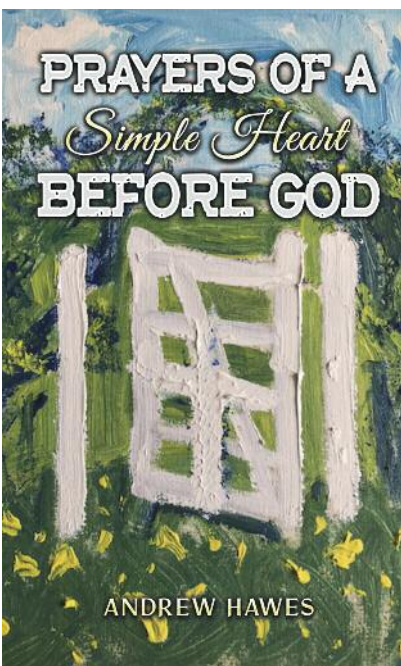
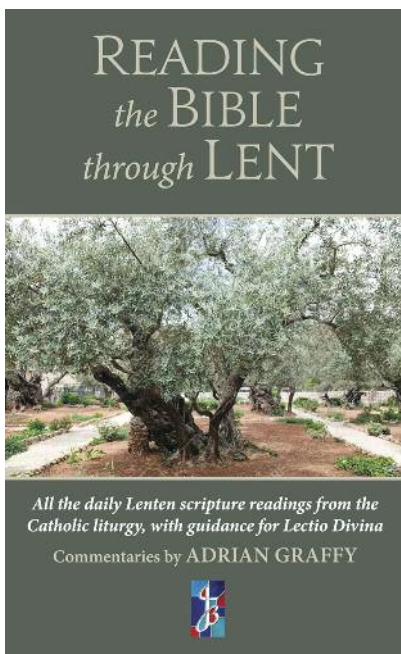
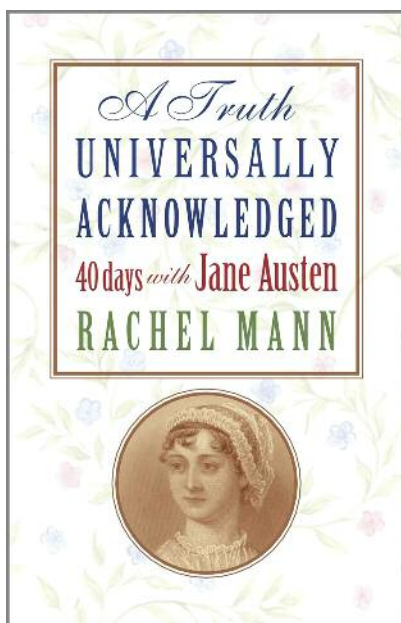
this Eastertide, for which many congratulations.

The ‘book of the book’ this year comes from Rachel Mann with ***A Truth Universally Acknowledged: 40 Days with Jane Austen*** (Canterbury Press). Avid readers will spot the reference to *Pride and Prejudice*, which Mann describes as ‘of all Austen’s novels, ...the one I’ve returned to most often’. But she looks at the whole Austen oeuvre because ‘ultimately there is simply too much good stuff across the six completed novels’. We’re in safe hands. Mann guides the reader through the books as the season. There is evidence of close reading, but worn lightly, and the little prayer each day can aid further reflection. The book is a good example of integrated theology, especially as it’s not necessary to like or even have read Jane Austen. Lent can be a time for looking at things differently, and even taking on extra. Mann writes with humour and humanity, and an infectious love of Jane Austen. Another lovely book.

The ‘book of the film’ is ***Christ and the Chocolaterie*** (DLT) by Hilary Brand. An update of her 2002 version, it’s a sensitive and interesting walk through the film ‘Chocolat’, itself based on the Joanna Harris novel. Some additional pages at the back consider the history and ‘unfair economics’ of chocolate, along with some recipes. This is ideal for a house group and Brand offers plenty of exercises and discussion points to help things along.

Fr Adrian Graffy, a member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission since 2014, has built on his popular series of commentaries on the Sunday Gospels with ***Reading the Bible through Lent*** (DLT). It does exactly as it says on the tin. A daily passage, with a short prayer petition and brief scriptural commentary. It’s straightforward and non-nonsense. Just the sort of thing to keep anyone on track.

Another day-by-day approach is from Tom Wright. ***Lent and Easter for Everyone: from wilderness to glory*** (SPCK) is a bit of a ‘greatest hits’ from his *For Everyone* writings. There’s strong scholarship here, in manageable portions, and re-



flection points for discussion or personal meditation. Often there are useful reminders or insights from bible study and theological work, and yet is not a classroom text. He writes with fluency and a sure, honest grip on his subject matter.

In ***Transfiguration*** (Canterbury Press), Rob Marshall has taken a ‘glory moment’ and stretched it out across the weeks. For this author, each day represents a ‘pilgrim step... from low down in the Jezreel Valley in Galilee to the summit of Mount Tabor – the probable venue of Jesus’ Transfiguration. Then after some time on the mountain... descend again to the plain and to the inevitability of what Jerusalem holds for our Lord’. Depending on which lectionary is used, the Transfiguration passage comes up either just before Lent, or within it. The reflections are thoughtful and wide-ranging, with daily prayers and discussion questions too. It’s overflowing with Transfiguration content and will easily prove useful beyond Lent.

ND’s very own Andrew Hawes has written ***Prayers of a Simple Heart before God*** (Austin Macauley) which takes readers on a Lenten prayer journey using the daily gospel. After the bible passage, a prayer-poem offers contemplation, entering deeply into the seasonal call for a closer walk with God. Loyal readers will know Andrew’s gentle style which holds wellsprings of prayer and sustained spiritual wisdom. Again, the daily format enables structure and commitment throughout the 40 days, with bonus Eastertide material for St Joseph and the Annunciation. There is much to commend this volume and it will reward anyone who spends time in its company.

Elsewhere in this issue, Nicolas Stebbing recommends ***Passions of the Soul*** (Bloomsbury) by Rowan Williams. Bloomsbury has also recently released ***The Spirit of Catholicism*** by Vivian Boland OP in paperback, and Michael Langrish’s overview of Benedict XVI titles will also be of interest. **ND**

Simon Walsh

Conformed to Christ

One year on from the death of Benedict XVI, *Michael Langrish* reads two books which throw further light on this towering and controversial figure of the Church and modern Catholic world

Benedict XVI: A Life Volume II: Professor and Prefect to Pope and Pope Emeritus 1966-the Present
by Peter Seewald Bloomsbury Continuum

With God You Are Never Alone: The Great Papal Addresses - Pope Benedict XVI. Bloomsbury

The Biography

The second volume of Peter Seewald's authorised biography of Joseph Ratzinger begins with him as a professor at Tübingen University, a colleague of Hans Küng – theologians each with a dazzling reputation but very different views on the future of the Church; views which, ultimately in Ratzinger's view, derive from different understandings of Jesus. Is the Church's founder to be reduced to a historical figure, his life and teaching to be constantly contextualised and relativised by changing fashions in scholarship? Or is he the universal and eternal cosmic Christ, with all that this implies for witness to revealed truth?

The answer given to this fundamental question then shapes how progress and reform in the church are to be understood and applied. Tübingen undoubtedly brought a clarification and a parting of the ways from former colleagues as younger German progressives at Vatican II. 'Certainly I was progressive at that time,' Ratzinger said, 'but progressive did not yet mean that you broke away from the faith, but that you learn from its origins to understand it better and live it better. The point is to rescue the faith from the rigidity of the system and reawaken its original vital power without giving up what is really valid in it.' There are two different kinds of false renewal: the first is expressed in obstinate individualism. The second in institutional rejection of tradition in order to adapt to the world. Real Christian renewal leads to a new simplicity which is missionary at heart. The aim is not to make Christians more comfortable in conforming to the world or fashionable mass culture. Rather, it is equipping them to be faithful to the exhortation of St Paul: 'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed.' Such reforming radicalism is focused not on secularisation of the church but a renewed desire for holiness and standing firm against what Christ is not.

This is what Ratzinger himself declared to be the constant of his ministry from Professor to Pontiff, from beginning to end: always to release the core of the faith from encrustations and to liberate its power and dynamism to transform the world. While humans may improve their situation, they cannot themselves rid the world of the disorder in creation, the fact of sin and evil which are the ultimate causes of temptation, oppression and misery. Renewal in Christ, rather than the pursuit of utopian ide-

BENEDICT XVI



ologies, is what gives hope. This, he insists, has been the constant of his life. The extent to which it was so is something that this biography sets out to explore.

With the parting of the ways in Tübingen came a move to the University of Regensburg in his beloved Bavaria, 'because it would be peaceful there', and so conducive to the scholarly life which remained his ambition, but one that was to constantly elude him. Against the background of a wholesale rejection of authority of any kind, culminating in the worldwide student revolts of 1968, and of which he saw theological revisionism to be a part, the scholar was already shaping up as a defender of the faith.

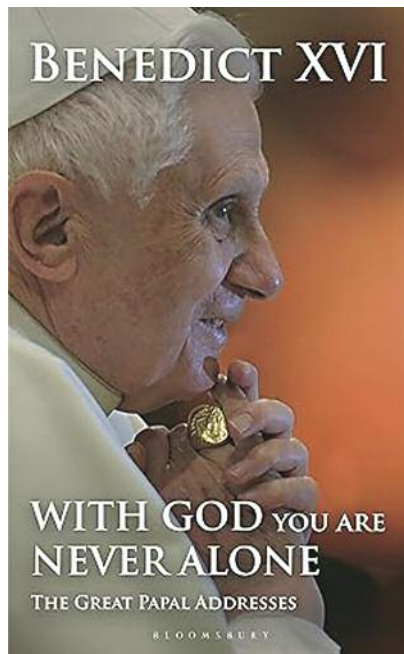
'If there is a date for Ratzinger's entry into battle mode,' writes Seewald, 'then it is 14 September 1970.' Fearing that the work Vatican II was in danger of being manipulated, if not wholly misappropriated, by those who saw reformation and secularisation going hand in hand, he showed his combative verve as co-founder and co-editor of the alternative journal *Concilium*, aimed at addressing a decline in Catholic theology and the resulting confusion arising from reinterpretation of doctrine to suit the spirit of the age.

Pope Paul VI, too, had misgivings about the direction of the Church after Vatican II and in 1976 he drew Ratzinger out of the academy, making him Archbishop of Munich and Freising and, a year later, a Cardinal. Only 50 years old, it was to be a short tenure with little time to make a lasting impact. A year on, Pope Paul VI died and, after the short reign of John Paul I, the cardinals elected the Polish Karol Wojtyla who took the name John Paul II. Meeting at the two conclaves, Wojtyla and Ratzinger discovered that they agreed about what was wrong with the Church. After only six years in Munich, Ratzinger was summoned to Rome by John Paul II as Prefect for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The issues coming across the new Prefect's desk were many and huge: birth control, intercommunion, celibacy, authority, the ordination of women, the disciplining of clergy, the Tridentine mass, the schismatic Lefebvrites and Liberation Theology. For the Vatican's response Ratzinger was constantly attacked by the liberal media and the tropes of the Polish Pope's 'panzer cardinal' and 'God's rottweiler' were born. To explore the extent to which these caricatures are unfair is part of this book's aim and the way in which these issues were addressed, and why, is meticulously described. It shows how, always, Ratzinger's driving desire was to communicate the fundamentals of Christianity, while closely watching what was going on in the world and might disturb believers. In this, maybe one of his greatest achievements may come to be seen the monumental 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' brought into being, against the odds.

Ratzinger became, and remains, a touchstone for many Catholics – both among traditionalists who approve of what he achieved, and revisionists for whom he is the one who 'prevented the Church from moving into the contemporary era'.

For a time after his election as Pope in 2005, this polarised view seemed to be fading as, freed from his CDF role, the genuine warmth of his personality, his self-effacing nature, and the simplicity of his personal lifestyle were, alongside his undoubted scholarship and spirituality, in his general audiences and papal visits, allowed to shine through. It seemed that millions were genuinely learning to love him. But then came the crises (real or media provoked) occasioned by his Regensburg speech (reported as anti-Islamic); his pastoral reaching out to the traditionalist Society of Pius X (leading to accusations of being antisemitic); the 'condoms'



outrage (portrayed as anti-humanitarian); the scandals of abuse by clergy, financial management, and the leaking of Vatican papers (held up as failures of leadership). The evidence, and the responses of serious commentators at the time, show much of the criticism to be unjust, but once again he could be firmly fixed in the cross hairs of liberal sights. There is no doubt that, as a scholar and theologian, his views and the way in which he expressed them, were often more nuanced than reporters could handle. He (and the Vatican) in general were slow to get to grips with the reductionist means and slogans of a social media age. He freely admitted 'practical government is not my strong point', and he showed a loyalty to colleagues and friends be-

yond that which was sometimes deserved. Yet for all that, the painstaking evidence accumulated in this book shows him to be one of the great Christian figures of the 20th century, and one who would have had a lasting standing in the Church even had he not become pope.

Whatever his own shortcomings, it is hard not to conclude that much of the opposition to Benedict, in the Church as much as in the wider world, stems from (as he put it in a comment made to the author after he became the first pontiff to resign in 800 years) 'the actual threat to the church coming from the global dictatorship of ostensibly humanistic ideologies... modern society formulating an anti-Christian creed, and opposing it is punished with social excommunication'.

The Addresses

Many of the themes of Ratzinger/Benedict's life and teaching explored by Pete Seewald are given sharper focus in the slim volume containing the text of just ten addresses of the many given by Benedict XVI over his eight years as Pope. To label them as *the* great addresses is bold. What makes a speech great? Its rhetorical style and



erudition, its content and the impact made, or whether it will stand the test of time? What we do have here, though, is broadly representative of some of the main themes of this papacy and of the approach – theological, spiritual and pastoral – that Benedict characteristically brought to them.

The addresses fall into two categories: those concerned with the ‘life of the Church and those that engage politics, history, and ethics more broadly, including the very personal 2006 speech delivered at the gates of Auschwitz-Birkenau, in which this German pontiff sought ‘forgiveness and reconciliation’ and offered ‘a plea to the living God never to let this happen again’.

It is a pity there is not a summary of the specific context in which each Address was given. We are simply told the year, place and occasion. There are, of course, further clues in the texts. But for many readers, this lack of further historical background may make it harder to enter the mindset and concerns of those to whom these speeches were given. What is significant, as the Foreword indicates, is that all the addresses were delivered in Europe, and this is not accidental. ‘Pope Benedict may well be the last ‘European Pope’; he was deeply immersed in the history and culture of Europe. It is in this context that [he] points to what he considers to be the dramatic breakdown of the relationship between faith and reason.’

Indeed, this subject features directly in two of the Addresses: ‘Reason: a guard against pure subjectivism’, a lecture given at Regensburg University, and ‘Meeting God by the Use of Reason’, given at a meeting with representatives from the world of culture in Paris. These are the most intellectually demanding of the ten pieces, very much in the style of the onetime professor of theology, albeit one with a deeply pastoral heart. Other addresses are striking in their simplicity and directness, as in his Installation sermon on becoming Pope ‘Christ guides the Church’, in which he draws on the striking images of the pallium and fisherman’s ring, to powerfully set out enduring truths and to point to things at the heart of the ministry of Jesus which must continue to inform the church and her ministers today.

Frequently one is reminded of his devotion to his predecessor, John Paul II, alongside a useful commentary on that Pope’s contribution to the Church’s life. There has been much debate about what led to the ‘reforming’ Ratzinger of Vatican II becoming ‘God’s Rottweiler’, the uncompromisingly conservative Prefect in charge of promulgating and defending Catholic doctrine. It is interesting to read here his own careful exposition of, and commentary, on the two very different hermeneutics of the Council, two different ways of interpreting and applying its work, that have come to dominate much debate about the church today. Did the Council intend a ‘rupture’ and discontinuity with the past, or regenerative ‘reform’?

Unsurprisingly he sees himself as having gone into the Council, and emerging from it, committed to the latter, to a process of constant renewal in continuity of ‘the one subject which the Lord has given to us... a subject which increases in time and develops, yet which always



remains the same, the one subject of the journeying People of God’. In this context, he has wise, and challenging, words to say about the role of bishops in times of uncertainty and change: ‘Through the Sacrament they have received, bishops are stewards of the Lord’s gift. They are ‘stewards of the mysteries of God’. (1 Cor. 4.1); as such they must be found to be ‘faithful’ and ‘wise’ (cf. Luke 12.41-48). This requires them to administer the Lord’s gift in the right way, so that it is not left concealed in some hiding place but bears fruit, and the Lord may end by saying to the administrator: ‘Since you were dependable in a small matter I will put you in charge of larger affairs.’ And, he pertinently adds, ‘in our time too the Church remains a “sign that will be opposed” (Lk 2.34)’.

These Addresses go a long way to giving us a brief but comprehensive portrait of an intelligent, articulate, and often compassionate leader, equally willing to discuss disturbing concrete issues (such as the sexual abuse scandals that came to light during his papacy, for which he implores ‘forgiveness from God and from the persons involved’) as to tackle demanding theological concerns that are central to the Church’s being able to speak clearly of Christ, the human face of God, especially at a time when God seems to have disappeared to the edges of secular humankind. The voice throughout is that of a teacher and pastor, and at times also a prophet, one with a finger on the pulse of the movement of the Spirit in the world today. It is also the voice of the faithful disciple and man of prayer: ‘The Church is alive because Christ is alive.’ ‘Those who believe are never alone – neither in life nor in death.’

Just 12 months after his death, it is still too early to make definitive judgements about this pope and his place in history. Benedict XVI probably remains little understood by the media and even much of his own church. However, one thing may be said with confidence, that part of his legacy will be the articulation of a powerful conviction that the Gospel and the Catholic Church can still make a difference in the modern world. **[ND]**

A former Bishop of Exeter (2000-13), the Rt Revd Michael Langrish has been an honorary assistant bishop of the Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe since 2018, and the Diocese of Chichester from 2013. He met Pope Benedict XVI on a number of occasions.

Disciples with Deep Roots

From a Roman Catholic perspective, *Robert Billing* wonders what the Church might look like in five to ten years' time

In a reflection given in 1969, a young German priest and theologian, saw challenging times ahead for the Catholic Church. He said:

From the crisis of today the Church of tomorrow will emerge – a Church that has lost much. She will become small and will have to start afresh more or less from the beginning. She will no longer be able to inhabit many of the edifices she built in prosperity. As the number of her adherents diminishes, so will she lose many of her social privileges. In contrast to an earlier age, she will be seen much more as a voluntary society, entered only by free decision. As a small society, she will make much bigger demands on the initiative of her individual members.



Fr Joseph Ratzinger's prophecy of ecclesiastical shrinkage in the West has proved to be mostly accurate. Throughout the Western world, for the last half-century, religion in general and Catholicism in particular have been in decline. In the United States alone, one in three Americans is said to be religiously unaffiliated. And from 2001 to the present, Gallup reports, belief in God among Americans went from 90 per cent to 74 per cent. It claimed that only about one Catholic in six attends Mass every Sunday, in the States, while seven out of ten do not believe Jesus is really present in the Eucharist.

Numerical decline in people and priests

The numerical decline certainly applies also in England and Wales, meaning fewer people at Mass with less priests to serve them. This cannot be surprising: in the 2021 census, only 46.2 per cent of residents, or 27.5 million people, described themselves as Christian. This is down from 2011, when 59.3 per cent, or 33.3 million, said they were Christian. In 2001, 71.7 per cent described themselves as Christian.

Dioceses in numerous Western countries are engaged in institutional contraction. Some are more successful than others at facing, never mind delivering, some kind of reorganization.

The draining of energy in buildings & structures

Although some dioceses in England and Wales have reluctantly linked and merged parishes, many church buildings have, in fact, survived. In my own Diocese of Lancaster, and in other northern Catholic dioceses, in a place like Preston, we have several massive church buildings that were built for between 800 and 1200 people in

one sitting; today a dozen elderly Catholics might attend one Sunday Mass. There is no way such a miniscule congregation can support the maintenance of so many vast buildings!

Frequently, one priest has responsibility for two or three parishes, with several such churches. While parishioners are getting used to this arrangement,

the pastoral health and missionary zeal of the parish will often take second or third place as poorly-formed and passive congregations become fixated on a rather reductionist model of Church – keeping a Mass going in their church building, no matter what.

Though some diocesan bishops and parish priests simply struggle to cope with ploughing their time and energy into property management, church finances, church schools and academisation, and maintaining routines and expectations of yesteryear, others are beginning to figure out how to turn the vast institutional machinery they have inherited into launch platforms for mission.

The key is baptism

We are aware that the key to a new evangelisation seems to be getting people to really own their baptism, so that baptism is not so much a family initiation rite but the sacrament that configures us to Christ the Lord and makes us His friends – who then gives each of us, as the baptized, *the Great Commission*, and ways to serve Him, and the Gospel in various specific vocations.

Somehow, we must show by the joyful nobility of our lives that the Gospel is liberating, not confining. And we must proclaim in our preaching and evangelisation and in our catechesis that, in the risen Lord Jesus, we see both the face of the merciful Father and the truth about our own humanity and its extraordinary God-given destiny.

Formation for the laity

The *Synthesis document* of the recent [Roman Catholic] session of the *Synod on Synodality* in Rome sketches a role for the lay faithful that is considerably more substantial and spiritually intense than the conventional view of lay people would have it. While formation programmes to meet this need have begun springing up here and there, more are certainly necessary. The formation of a spiritually and pastorally mature lay faithful should be at the top of the to-do list as a smaller – but more intentional – Church takes shape. In fairness, the *Synthesis document* explicitly highlights that in section 14.

Most of us here will probably want to acknowledge

that the lay faithful in this smaller Church will need to be the primary evangelizers. That is hardly a new thought, of course, as Vatican II's *Lumen gentium* makes clear:

The laity... are given this special vocation: to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can become the salt of the earth.

Clearer doctrine in our teaching and preaching

We will need to see a revival of clarity in doctrinal integrity in our catechetics and preaching, and a recovery of metaphysics that gives people a coherent and profound philosophy of the created order. The publishing houses of Gracewing, Sophia and Ignatius Press do much good in this regard. As part of this, expository preaching that breaks open the Word of God will help people understand themselves, the world, and our responsibilities in the Church and the world through a biblical lens. That kind of vision helps cure the myopia that leads us to misread the signs of the times.

It is certainly very encouraging to witness the recovery of a Catholic reading of the Bible, in excellent publications coming out of the Church in the United States such as the St Augustine Institute, helping to hear, as Aidan Nichols put it, 'a reading of Scripture in the same spirit as that in which it was written, rather than in the light of academic fashion'. Such a homiletic renewal will also increasingly need to continue to use the many and varied online instruments and digital spaces made available to us.

A Re-enchantment of the sacred liturgy

A re-enchantment and re-sacralisation of the liturgy, in terms of faithful translation, the 'art of celebrating', a sound hymnody, noble vestments, an increased sensitivity for beauty in ecclesiastical art and liturgical architecture is also needed since the liturgy forms the Catholic imagination. A flattening or debasement of the sacred liturgy, or a cutting it off from its historical tradition and sources, is most harmful and self-defeating. Similarly, the Eastern tradition reminds us of the power of the consecrated, and especially the monastic life, in supporting the active life of the Church by the power of prayer.

Renewing Christian political thought

If the Church does not have a strong identity and articulation in the public arena, it will become much easier to drive the Church from the public square in most areas. Certainly, great damage is done to the Church, and its interaction with society, when Catholic politicians sell out in front of the world.

We know there is no honourable retreat from what is sometimes deplored as the 'culture wars'. The Church is seldom the aggressor in the face of a programmatic secularisation in this, and in many countries, but has to continually rise up again so as to engage in the public market place of ideas, with the tools of reason, articulation, and persuasion, for the sake of all religious communities, and indeed for the sake of religious freedom, for the nurturing

of the family, and the protection of the poor, the weak and the voiceless, especially the refugee, the elderly, the disabled, and, of course, the unborn.

We know that matters of sexuality and gender, and the dignity of human life and the role of women, are going to continue to be significant issues where the Church frequently seems to be on the back-foot in a reactionary or defensive position. Rather, we need to be *ahead* of these significant issues, devoting considerable time and effort in terms of thinking and cultivating young thinkers – women and men – to offer a positive exposition of the Church's teaching on the value of our human dignity rather than constantly reacting to the *zeitgeist* or lobby groups on these issues. I propose this despite the immense trauma and suffering of the abuse scandals.

The real polarization

There is much talk today of polarisation in the Church. However, some people are beginning to recognise that the fundamental polarisation is increasingly between the living parts of the Church, and it is the dying or moribund parts. The living parts of the world Church are those that have embraced the *New Evangelisation* as the Church's principal strategy for the 21st century.

The dying or moribund parts of the world Church are those that are still living a Catholicism of institutional maintenance, often having lost confidence in the power of the Gospel. That means strengthening Catholics' conviction that Jesus Christ really is the answer to so many of the questions that face humanity. Because that conviction is the beginning of being a missionary disciple, where the 'Church is permanently in mission' [Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, 25].

Conclusion

Yes, even if the Church of the next five or ten years will be smaller, we know that even a tiny band of faithful and Spirit-filled disciples can change the world when they are willing to lose everything to proclaim the Good News. And while the overall trends may be bad, there are always some bright lights shining in the deepening gloom. These signs of genuine hope are, for the most part, exceptions. There is a great deal of dead and dying wood in the Church. And a time for pruning may be close at hand.

We walk by faith, knowing that anywhere the Gospel is proclaimed confidently, and in full – anywhere the adventures (and risks) of discipleship are taken seriously – there the Church has hope. She has a future.

Where the Church insists on measuring the Gospel according to the 'wisdom' of the world; where the faith, or its *praxis*, accommodates or reshapes itself to the spirit of the age; anywhere the Church is simply reduced to a 'charitable NGO' there the faith will continue to wither.

Whatever lies in store, we can expect that much more will be demanded of each one of us who claim to be disciples of the Crucified One. We must continue to have deep roots, as we strive to be 'profoundly Catholic'. **[ND]**

The Revd Dr Robert Billing is the Rector of the Catholic National Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady in Walsingham.

Glorify God with a Joyful Spirit

The Church is under pressure, so sing with Our Lady, says *Hassan Musa*

*And Mary said, 'My Soul glorifies the Lord,
And my Spirit rejoices in God my Saviour'.
(Luke 1.46, 47)*

In the context of global upheavals in Europe and the Middle East, with the known conditions of wars still going on, how do we learn to be the people of faith? In the context of African poverty, high levels of corruption, religious hypocrisy and manipulation of power by and for the few to the detriment of the general public, how do we learn to be the people of faith and hope against all forms of disorder and injustice around us? Perhaps the words of Mary in Luke 1.46-55 as the most 'revolutionary song on the lips of Mary' according to the sermon by Dietrich Bonhoeffer on 17 December, 1933, will inspire us in the midst of all the tragedies to also find good reasons for hope in the love of God. Mary teaches us to learn to glorify God with a joyful Spirit from the depth of the heart.

Firstly, Mary said, 'My soul glorifies the Lord'. This has been the longing of the Psalmist, speaking to himself, to his *nefesh* (soul, life, being) to glorify the Lord (Ps. 103.1ff). In the spirit of the Psalmist, to glorify the Lord means to find the freedom of the soul or life into the majestic acknowledgment of the glory of God. What keeps people in biblical times and now from actually glorifying the Lord is the lack of freedom of the soul. The human soul has been misdirected, said Saint Augustine; sin in its original sense is an actual misdirection of passion against the glory of God. The sin of Adam has in Adam misdirected the entire soul of humanity. No one seeks God, not even one (Rom 3.10-12). All have gone astray, everyone to his or her own way (Isa. 53.6). Away from God, away from the true acknowledgement and worship of God.

Martin Luther in the 16th century wrote one of his treatises on the Babylonian captivity of the Church. I think far before the captivity of Israel in Babylon, and later the so-called Babylonian captivity of the Church in the time leading to modern Enlightenment, the entire human race has been captured by sin. Sin has been the main master that kept the human soul into captivity. This is the actual captivity of the human soul in that no human being of his own accord, even though he may be conscious of God, can actually worship God and glorify him. All that the world religions tried to do was but a quest, an open quest, a longing, a deep longing for the reality of God. The soul was so impoverished without God and so she longed for the union with God, her true habitat. The only sense of her restoration is the freedom of God from such original captivity to the freedom of worship. The true essence of all freedom is the worship of God. No one is free if he or she is not free to worship God. The freedom to worship God is the actualization of our being truly human in the world of God. There is no way we can know God without, first, God freeing us for himself. Mary

found such freedom when she believed in the message of the angel. The angel spoke so tenderly yet was strange, he spoke so true yet from a distance; he was close to her only in appearance, but the message he bore was something far beyond him. The beyond-ness between the angel and Mary is the true pointer to the worship of God.

What, then, is the worship of God? As stated in the Westminster Catechism, the true essence or objective of man on earth is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. This is the essence of worship, to glorify God and enjoy him forever. The worship of old time before the rise of Israel as a nation was only a quest for the reality of God. It was all guess-work in dramatically demonstrating the longing from the darkness of the human heart. The worship of the new civilizations that followed was a mere tradition, a mere identity process which aims mostly at the demonstration of its externality as something to be grasped.

The worship in African Traditional Religions (ATR) was also a quest for harmony with nature for the sake of nature and self. The African man knew from his natural consciousness that he was not an artificial being. Thus, his longing was the harmony of self with nature, that which was created, and not that which was made or is being made by the wisdom and choice of man. This is why, when the Western colonialists and missionaries came with their civilizations according to new Western cultures and manners, they found the African man as a staunch rebel. He was actually rebelling from everything that confronts or contradicts his nature or the nature of life in his environment. Someone joked that, if the African man was the one put in the Garden of Eden, he would have remained there until now, because the African man loves his environment and would not want to do anything to move away from his environment. Even at death, the African finds joy and dignity if he is promised to be brought 'back home' to be buried beside his or her ancestors.

Be that as it may, the essence of worship is more than self-unification with nature and the environment. In the modern and post-modern times, worship moves to the realm of human choices and the satisfaction of the feelings of the heart and not the nourishment of the soul. This is what polarizes worship not to be the worship of God in its true sense of the word but rather to change patterns to being a self-serving ideology that makes the human being feel good. The rising of emotions or the expressions of feelings of the heart are the actual expressions of worship. This has made the idea of worship so mundane and the practice of worship so sterile. Little wonder that nothing serious changes in the worshipper and the 'nothing' is felt in the process of worship. Nevertheless, worship is beyond what we feel or do not feel. Worship is the demonstration of the freedom of our soul in obedience and true love for God. Worship is the encounter with God. Every

act of worship is the enactment of heaven posteriori. Every speech in worship is the enactment of heaven a priori. Worship is only unto God.

Worship is the glorification of God over everything and against everything. Mary worshipped God truly because her soul was free and in her freedom she glorified the Lord. The Lord in this context is the Lord as Trinity. The Lord Jesus Christ has not yet been made humanly manifest the world, the Lord as Spirit is also hidden in the breath of God the Father. Thus the focus is on God as the Father Almighty, whose nature and passion are only love for his people. The manifestation of Jesus is the claim of God over what is rightfully his that the captives may be set free, and the joy of their freedom is the unity of God and his beloved people. Saint Augustine wrote in his Confessions, 'Thou has created us for thy self and our heart is restless until she finds rest in thee.' In this history and actualization of salvation, as the beloved people of God, we are the country he was longing for, and he is the country we long for, now finding our rest in God and God finding his rest in us. Worship is an exchange of joy from God to the human being and from the human being to God. Like a lost child being found first by the voice of the parent who calls them back, and then by the warm parental embrace that restores the dignity and freedom of the child. Worship is freedom, and freedom is the glory of God.

Mary also said, 'and my spirit rejoices'. This is the echo of the first line in the preceding verse. It only repeats what the previous verse says in essence. Mary expresses the *state* of her spirit, not the *feeling* of her spirit. We only feel with the body and not with the spirit. The spirit is only that which is given to keep us alive and active, connected to the right order of being. The spirit here is not the Holy Spirit; she said 'my spirit'. No human being has the Holy Spirit as his or her possession. Only God can speak of the Holy Spirit as 'my Spirit'. Mary spoke of her own human spirit of life, this is the essence of her being actively alive

in the world. The spirit of life is life itself. The delight of the spirit points the human either to the liberation of the love of God, or the captivity of idolatry. It would be good to always ask, to what does my spirit incline? What is the object of the love and joy of my spirit? The spirit as life may be carried away from that which is from God to that which is godless.

There are many people in the modern world whose spirit rejoices in things and not in God. There are many who do not even have a spirit that rejoices. The spirit that rejoices is free, but the spirit of gloom is in captivity. The spirit that rejoices in things cannot rejoice at all, it can only be happy. Happiness is not joy, he who is only happy cannot rejoice, for his or her focus is only on things. All things make people happy in their own senses. But that is only transient, external, momentary, and never will satisfy. Things make people happy by how they look or how they feel. But joy comes only when the spirit is free and is united to her true essence in God. Mary's spirit rejoices, this means she has found her fulfilment in the true essence of life. This is the realization of her encounter with the living God who alone is the master and nurturer of the spirit by giving it life and by directing it in the light of being truly active in God.

It is the spirit that rejoices speaks of the mighty acts of God. It is the spirit that rejoices frees itself from all forms of idolatry, and itself cannot draw any attention for self-worship. The spirit that rejoices finds the essence of salvation, there is no salvation in the darkness of evil or the shadow of wishfulness. Salvation is the realization of the action of God for the freedom of man from all that keeps him captive. Salvation is the freedom of the soul and the excitement of the spirit into the renewal of self in the being of God. Mary's testimony should instruct us not only as to the essence of our sense of life, but its actual delight that makes it joyful and free for the worship of God. **ND**

Being Present and Building Up

Guy Jamieson reports from the frontlines of orthodoxy in the community

This unexpected follow-up to my 'Points of Difference' article in the previous issue of ND seemed to write itself quickly. I had underestimated just how the questions of poorly-defined Christian tradition can open up more immediate and dangerous consequences, and particularly on our own doorstep.

Last November, some members of the local Muslim community used the BBC Children in Need day to carry out an orchestrated form of abuse on staff in our local school. They used their own children to demand support for Palestine, regardless of the legal requirements on schools to remain impartial, and the subsequent bullying and intimidation has seriously damaged our neighbourhood.

I won't elaborate on the details, but when a school governor refers to Jesus in a CofE school as a 'Palestinian

prophet' we have an obvious example of how urgent the need is for greater clarity of the Church's faith, not simply amongst a predominantly Muslim population but a non-Muslim community who at best are exposed to a Church-less Christianity.

The faith of the Church has always brought an awareness of a Christ who suffers. We're aware that neglect of his Church and the faith he left for us to treasure is the same as neglect of himself. We believe that he 'thirsts' for us, such is his love, 'poured out' for us 'for the forgiveness of sins.' Where there is neglect or abuse, either of God's Church or each other, the invitation of 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' remains ever-present.

From the trauma of recent events this invitation has presented itself here in ways which have perseverance of

a Church and her ministry, ever-present. Within a matter of days it's now we who are being asked the questions, amongst them 'What makes Christianity more distinct? What are the Creeds? What is worship and what are sacraments?'

There can be no reason for people to live with such a low level of self-worth

We are now moving from an unrealistic preoccupation with 'commonalities' to the life-giving acknowledgment of distinctiveness. Consequently, we're about to host the first of two sessions for staff in the church as a 'safe space' where they can express what they really think and feel about the situation they live and work in. Some have harboured thoughts they dare not give voice to for fear it will 'come out badly'. But there is no escaping this; recent events have brought them to the surface with a greater sense of urgency and need for it to be channelled.

Initial conversations amongst the staff revealed fearfulness, a desire to move, pessimism and even cynicism. But perhaps most notably, a sense of defeatism and a loss of dignity they feel they can do nothing about; 'We're used to it' – 'We just wait for the next thing, and then the next generation will do the same.' Whilst a living Church exists in such a community, there can be no reason for people to live with such a low level of self-worth. We've kept our Crib up for as long as possible this year to help with teaching and as a reminder that human dignity comes

as a consequence of God taking flesh and dwelling amongst us, not despite of the capacity inherent within human beings to diminish or even destroy one another.

The 'safe space' sessions will conclude with Evening Prayer (new to most staff) and there'll be conversations about the sacramental life of the Church being the Christ-given means of exchanging the downward pull of sin for the restorative, saving gift of life in God. We'll also be looking at the Spiritual Works of Mercy, in particular the work known as 'instruction of ignorance' as a means of dealing with the need for renewal. This is something which can easily be shared and led between teacher, staff member and priest. As the text I use for this beautifully explains, 'through instruction I build up a person (the Latin word *instruere* means 'to construct') and I make them freer.' (See the Year of Mercy CTS publication by Mgr Paul Grogan.)

Further distinctiveness about Christian identity will follow when the school updates its profile and website to include the Apostles' Creed as the summary of belief, rather than it being left to the presentation of values that Jesus made apparent. It is important to be both firm and clear.

As part of the season of Lent, we've arranged a service in Church which will in effect be a presentation of how the Church imparts the distinctive work of Christ in her liturgy. It'll be a carefully scripted, hands-on presentation which will, we hope, form part of that much-needed renewal in the distinctive reconciling work of God in Christ.

ND

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1pm Lunch (provided) at Bishop's Palace

2pm Teaching Session by the Bishop of Oswestry
'I believe': Deepening a living faith through the Apostles' Creed at Bishop's Palace

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Grace at the Last

Andrew Greany reflects on our cultural relationship with funerals

‘Inside the undertakers’ was a recent BBC documentary presented by Stacey Dooley. Spending a fortnight exploring all aspects of a funeral director’s business, she faced very honestly her own fears about death and reluctance to talk about it. Apart from this personal and perhaps counter-cultural exploration, two funerals were shown in the course of the programme. One was firmly Christian, and took place in a church; the other, of a 10-year-old girl who had died of cancer, was conducted by a humanist celebrant. One of the most fascinating moments in the hour long programme was when this celebrant said: ‘Heaven has gained another angel’. The secular, it seems, cannot entirely rid itself of religious imagery and hopes.

The final weeks of 2023 also saw the publication of a Theos Think Tank report on responses to death and dying in the UK. According to its research, fewer than half of Britons now want a funeral. 55% ‘don’t see the point of a funeral’. 43% ‘don’t want a traditional service’. 67% think that the ‘money could be spent in a better way’. And, according to this report, it’s not just the younger generation: 32% even of those over 55 don’t want a funeral. And very few people, it seems, would seek contact with a ‘faith leader’ at a time of bereavement. Furthermore, quite apart from any conclusions which may be drawn from this report, it is well known that many funeral services, religious or secular, are now ‘celebrations of the life’ of the deceased, with an emphasis on ‘I did it My Way’. This is likely to involve an avoidance, even in some religious funerals, of a traditional and set Order of Service with biblical readings and prayers, in favour of a selection of items chosen by the family (or possibly instructed by the deceased).

Does any of this matter? To whom might it matter? I would contend that there are major questions for the whole of our society, and for the West. What lies behind ‘not seeing the point of a funeral’? Might this be an attempt, in a culture which believes that it has the skills to overcome any barrier, any failure, to pretend that there is *no* real loss, *no* ‘letting go’, to be faced when a loved one dies? The possible cost of a funeral is then just one excuse (not that there aren’t issues about cost, as with the cost of weddings, and the pressure to have to do everything in a particular way). A society which reduces mourning rites to ‘having a party’, which only looks back (and that through rose-tinted glasses), which pretends that all’s right with all of us, risks grave and corporate psychological damage.

But this also matters to the Church. Perhaps we might first take heart from the humanist’s use of religious imagery, for it suggests that priests should not be faint-hearted about using such imagery, and, more broadly, that we should be confident in preaching the gospel of him

who shared our humanity, experienced the darkness of death, and was raised to life. It is witnessing to St Paul’s conviction that if our hope is for this life only, we are indeed to be pitied, and to his powerful sense of communion in the Body of Christ. But furthermore, from our particular Anglican Catholic perspective, we should recall that the Guild of All Souls was founded in 1873 not least to improve the conduct of funerals in the Church of England at that time. Those who, with Fr Tooth’s encouragement and support, founded the Guild, must have had a deep concern both for the bereaved, and for the eternal good of the deceased. So it was that prayer for the departed became a vital part of the Guild’s work; this is prayer which binds together the mourner and the deceased in the person of Jesus Christ. With modern cultural evasions of realities and the general loss of a sense of mystery, what particular ways might there be to encourage good practice?

Thinking about our own death is one way, such as making a will, what to do about our pets, the conduct of our funeral. This is helpful to families, funeral directors and clergy alike. It may also be in a sense a mission document, spreading the word about good funeral practice and the importance of being prepared for our death.

Parish clergy should have good working relationships with local funeral directors, and this a priority. It should be clear to all that clergy are willing and readily available to conduct funerals, and to offer ongoing pastoral support to the bereaved, as has always been a part of good parochial ministry. Parish clergy should be proactive and imaginative in inviting the bereaved to special services of prayer for the departed, most obviously to Requiem Mass at All Soulside, with members of the congregation lighting candles in memory of their loved ones.

Most importantly, priests must have confidence in preaching the gospel at funerals, as well as responding to the feelings of the bereaved; they must have the confidence not to sell people short. Reception of the body into church the evening before the funeral, absolution over the bier; these are aspects of a funeral which I have frequently found to be particularly moving even, perhaps especially, for the ‘unchurched’. It speaks way more powerfully than pick-and-mix ‘celebrations of life’. If a humanist celebrant at a funeral can speak of heaven and angels, surely the way is open for us to find new confidence in ministry to the bereaved and the conduct of funerals. **ND**

*Fr Andrew Greany SSC was the Guild of All Souls’
Chantry Priest at Walsingham 2018-23.*

*To find out more about the Guild of All Souls,
visit guildofallsouls.org.uk*

Fr Kevin Smith makes Missionary Move from Walsingham to Kent

Fr Kevin Smith SSC, Priest Administrator of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham since 2016, has been appointed as the next Vicar of St Augustine's, Belvedere in the Diocese of Rochester, and will be inducted over the summer. The National Pilgrimage on Monday 27 May will be his last public service at the Shrine, and he will continue as a Priest Guardian of the Holy House.

Described as having committed 'a pastor's heart, a deep faithfulness and a beautiful understanding of the power of pilgrimage to his work', Master of the College

of Guardians, Bishop Philip North, commended Fr Kevin's time in Norfolk. 'He has steered the Shrine through the profound challenges of the pandemic and has brought fresh vision and direction as we have built back afterwards. Fr Kevin has been an outstanding Priest Administrator, and he will return to Parish ministry with the prayers, the love and the gratitude of the College of Guardians.'

Reflecting on his time at the Shrine, Fr Kevin said: 'It has been a huge privilege to serve in this unique role and to have the opportunity to meet so many pilgrims who love this holy place so deeply. I pay tribute to the wonderful staff team who have supported me, and I am confident that the Shrine's ministry and witness will go from strength to strength in the coming years.'

'He will be much missed but goes with our prayers and blessing to be a missionary in Kent,' added the Rt Revd Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich. 'Father Kevin has given faithful service as Priest Administrator at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, whilst also giving much to the wider Diocese of Norwich as a Priest Vicar at Norwich Cathedral and through his involvement with planning an imaginative clergy conference held during the pandemic.' **ND**



PILGRIMAGE TO THE PAINTED CHURCHES OF MOLDAVIA

4th–12th September 2024

In Romania there are several UNESCO-listed painted churches situated in unspoilt countryside, but with modern pilgrim facilities. This autumn Fr Philip Warner, Rector of St Magnus the Martyr church in the City of London, and a frequent visitor to Moldavia, will be co-leading a pilgrimage to the best of them. The group is limited to twenty persons, and full details of the itinerary, cost and how to book will be sent (with no obligation) on request.



Having myself led this self-same pilgrimage to these painted monastery churches in Romania, I can thoroughly endorse this itinerary for all who are interested in art, architecture and the vibrancy of the Faith over many centuries and despite many hardships.

The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker

For further information, please email Fr Philip via pilgrimage@stmtm.org.uk

Return to Sender

William Davage laments the scandal of the Post Office

The scandal of the prosecution of sub-postmasters and mistresses has been running for some 20 years. It sometimes surfaced into public consciousness but faded. It was a further twist to the tale that it took a dramatization on ITV (*Mr Bates vs the Post Office*) to give it a new lease of life, and to ignite a firestorm of anger and contempt from the public. Such was that sentiment that HM Government acted with a rare degree of speed to rectify some two decades of institutional inertia.

Somewhat, but not entirely, unfairly, Sir Ed Davey, who had ministerial responsibility for some of that time was at the centre of the storm. He did not help his cause by failing to use the word ‘sorry’ and employing the usual bankrupt ministerial linguistic evasions. Part of his defence was that the Post Office ‘lied’ to him. He was not alone in swallowing the lies and evasion and craven, venal dishonesty of the Post Office. The financially well-rewarded panjandrum went without forensic challenge. It was a miserable and shameful episode in political failure.

As so often in institutional scandals, the original calumny of a systems failure was compounded by the cover up, the lies and dissembling that were such a feature of the Post Office response. One of the most shameful lies was that each sub-postmaster was told that they were the only ones having difficulties with the Horizon system.

For those who wish to know the full story, they should read the comprehensive series of judgements by Mr Justice Fraser in 2019. One, perhaps the most significant, *Bates and Others v Post Office Limited*, is a judgement of over 1000 paragraphs and is damning in its detail and cumulative effect. Yet the initial reaction of the Post Office was even more remarkable and disgraceful.

The Post Office, through its legal representatives, required Mr Justice Fraser to recuse himself for obvious bias. He rejected the demand in a measured judgement. The Post Office pressed on to the Court of Appeal. Here, the decision to refuse permission to appeal by Lord Justice Coulson was expressed in a judgement as sharply critical, in part even more critical, than that of the judgement at first instance. It repays some consideration.

Coulson LJ pointed out that ‘no judge will ever know more about this case generally and the common issues...than Fraser J’. He had heard extensive evidence, considered it, analysed it, and made findings of fact about the contracts with sub-postmasters; how they operated in practice; how the Post Office’s written terms differed from what could be expected by reasonable persons; the practical consequences of the manifest problems and failings of the Horizon computer system (‘the computer says no’). His laconic conclusion was that ‘challenges to such findings of fact are not open to an appellant in the position of the Post Office’.

Further criticisms of the appeal could also be read as

a damning condemnation of the governance of the Post Office, in addition to those of Fraser J. The appeal, he said, ‘made sweeping statements about the trial judgement which were demonstrably wrong. The Post Office ascribed various findings or conclusions to the judge which, on analysis, form no part of his judgement. As the judge himself noted, when refusing permission to appeal, even when concerned with findings that he did make, the Post Office took such findings ‘either wholly out of context, mis-stated or otherwise not correctly summarised’.

He pointed out that the Post Office, which described itself as ‘the nation’s most trusted brand’ founded its case ‘on the premise that the nation’s most trusted brand was not obliged to treat [its] Sub-postmasters with good faith’ but, in effect, maintained it was ‘entitled to treat them in capricious or arbitrary ways which would not be unfamiliar to a mid-Victorian factory-owner’. He pointed out the Post Office’s *Alice in Wonderland* logic, that it had the right to terminate sub-postmasters’ contracts arbitrarily and hold them to a standard of strict liability and responsibility for the errors made by the Post Office’s own computer system. A position the judge described as ‘startling’. His overall conclusion that Post Office arguments were ‘hopeless’ and it undermined its own position through sweeping, incoherent statements which failed to understand the previous judgement.

Presiding over this long, drawn-out persecution (no other word is adequate) for much of the period was the Revd Paula Vennells, CEO of the Post Office and NSM at St Owen, Bromham, in the Diocese of St Alban’s. She was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the New Year’s Honours’ List of 2019, ironically ‘for services to the Post Office and to charity’. It took five years for her to return it.

Before that, as the scandal attracted more public attention and opprobrium, she had withdrawn from active pastoral ministry. It emerged that in 2017 she had been on the short list, and was interviewed, to succeed Richard Chartres as Bishop of London. That she was considered with such a flimsy clerical background is another reason to undermine the already plummeting credibility of the Archbishop of Canterbury and it is little wonder that suggestions he should resign have been made.

What has been a scandal too long prolonged is compounded by the suicide of one of the sub-postmasters, the deaths of several others before exoneration, the ruin of hundreds of careers and lives. What redress can there be for that? Monetary compensation, although deserved, cannot be enough however large the sum. And some figures mentioned are derisory measured against the scale of the injury to the innocent parties. But there must be some degree of satisfaction in the vindication of the maxim, *Fiat instate ruat caeleum*: Let justice be done though the heavens fall. **ND**

◆ WANDERING BISHOP ◆

Philip North



For many people, it is just an oddly-shaped stick. For others, it is an anachronistic symbol of a culture of deference to Bishops that has long had its day. But bishops of all traditions still seem to retain a close and precious connection with the crozier they carry.

It reminds us we are not functionaries or managers, but shepherds. It symbolises the duty of love and care we have for the people we serve. The Bishop holding the crozier with both hands as the Gospel is proclaimed reminds us of the tenacity with which the church needs to cling hold to the Good News of Jesus Christ, which gives us life and hope.

Until Christmas, I was privileged to use the crozier that was the property of the third Bishop of Blackburn, Walter Baddeley. Fr Antony Hodgson, a priest in the Diocese of Blackburn, has written extensively in this journal about this remarkable man and his record both as war hero and as shepherd to the people of Melanesia, Whitby, and Blackburn.

So when I heard the news that his grandson, Jeremy Greaves, was to be Archbishop of Brisbane and (unsurprisingly) wanted his grandfather's crozier on a long-term loan, I was thrown into a moral dilemma. No part of me wanted to give away such a precious symbol!

Not for the first time, Bishop David Hope came to the rescue. As Bishop Jeremy was installed, to his great joy he was able to knock on the door with his grandfather's crozier which he now has on loan. In return I have use of the beautiful crozier gifted to Bishop Hope by the Guardians of the Shrine. Just occasionally, everyone is a winner.

The crozier is, in part, a symbol of the care that bishops have for their priests and I worry a great deal about a culture of overwork that is prevalent amongst many of our clergy. I

massively admire the sacrificial commitment that our priests show to their parishes. But I have also seen too many burn themselves out or lose the joy of ministry by not giving themselves space.

So each year, to try and set an example, I spend the inside of a week at Gladstone's Library in Hawarden with a disparate (and slightly dissolute) gang of priests from different parts of the country. We read, eat, sleep, and gossip.

Gladstone's Library is a wonderful gift to the church and I would strongly recommend a visit. The heady combination of a huge collection of books, comfortable bedrooms, good food – and a bar with an honesty box – makes it a very precious place apart.

However this year, my highlight was not a book, but a movie. One night we headed off for a pizza and film night at a vast and soulless retail centre in Broughton. I don't really have the attention span (or for that matter, the bladder) for films as they seem to get longer and longer all the time. But *One Life* held me spellbound, my concentration interrupted only by the noisy sobbing of the Vicar of St Ignatius, Sunderland, who was sitting next to me.

The film follows the life of Sir Nicholas Winton, an idealistic young stockbroker who travelled to Prague in 1938 and witnessed first-hand the plight of the Jewish refugee children who had been driven out of the Sudetenland after Nazi occupation. Through extraordinary attention to detail and the courage of small team based in Prague, Winton oversaw the escape by train of 669 children. And for the next 50 years, he barely talked about it.

Cue Esther Rantzen who heard about the story and, on her cult show 'That's Life', introduced Sir Nicholas not just to the people he rescued, but to family members who would never have existed without him.

The film is beautifully understated and gently acted, notably by the extraordinary Anthony Hopkins. It demonstrates that you don't need to be loud, charismatic or staggeringly gifted to make a difference. You just need a vision of what you want to achieve and the determination to match it.

That, I think, should come as a massive encouragement to our churches where, all too often we feel a sense of despondency because of a perceived lack of dynamic leaders or ageing congregations. Jesus has given us the vision of a kingdom of justice and peace. With gentle determination, and under his guidance, even small groups of people can make a difference in his name.

Meanwhile Anglo-Catholics are absorbing the news that the Priest Administrator of the Shrine, Fr Kevin Smith, has decided that God is calling him back into parochial ministry and so he will be moving on later in the year. I can't blame him. Being Priest Administrator is one of the most rewarding and interesting jobs in the Church of England, and I loved my six years there. It is also demanding, and so there is a time limit on how long it can be sustained.

Fr Kevin has done a remarkable job in steering the Shrine through the choppy waters of the pandemic and has done so through his own deep devotion to the Mother of God, and his belief in the transforming power of her Sanctuary in Walsingham. He goes with our thanks and love and prayers.

Please do pray hard as the Guardians discern who is being called to be his successor. **ND**

◆ FEBRUARY DIARY ◆

Lewis Oliver-Hemmings-Faye

Writing almost four weeks into 2024, it seems that this year will be just as busy as the last (when I had the great honour of being ordained to the sacred priesthood). With the New Year come renewed opportunities to reflect on the past twelve months and give thanks, but also to look forward to all that lies ahead.

A post-Christmas trip to Rome was just the tonic after a busy Advent and Christmas. We had seen bumper numbers attending the First Masses of Christmas across the three parishes we serve as a clergy team, as well as in the two parishes we are covering in addition. It meant that restorative time away was much needed. Disappointment was felt by all of us as we did not get to see the crib in St Peter's Square (Rome, not Manchester). Having been inspired by the Vatican's idea of placing St Francis in the crib scene as a way of marking the 800th anniversary of the first nativity scene in Greccio, and replicated this in our own church crib scenes, we felt quite deflated not to see it in person. Nevertheless, we enjoyed good weather and a day trip to Assisi was a highlight. We were glad to attend the Papal Audience on the second day of the trip. In his address, the Holy Father issued a cautionary warning against the sin of gluttony and over indulging of food and wine! Suffice it to say, that whilst we heeded his word, we did not spend the rest of the week eating salads and drinking water.

Back on home soil, at The Society Clergy Chapter last month, we welcomed the Director of Vocations, who gave us a brief overview of the new selection process. He shared with us some positive statistics of those who had been accepted to train for ordination sent from Society Parishes. This included men who

would not align themselves with the theological convictions of The Society, and some women also. He shared his delight in this, and congratulated us on our contribution to mutual flourishing and thanked us for our contribution to the life of the Diocese and its potential future clergy. This was certainly very encouraging to hear.

On the feast of Saint Anthony of Egypt, it was a joy to join two clergy colleagues, to pray and celebrate with them, as they both began new ministries. Both priests were cross-licensed to serve as Assistant Priests in each other's parish. It is good to see that strategic approaches to the future staffing of Society parishes is being taken seriously by the Diocese of Manchester. It means the mission and ministry of these parishes can be safeguarded for some years to come. Licensing or Induction services are not only great occasions to worship the Lord, but they also present great opportunities to share fellowship with friends old and new and celebrate all that God is doing in the life of His Church.

It feels that I spent the best part of a week on the phone to the Diocesan Property Department. The damage caused by storm Isha meant the loss of some fascia boards from the front of the vicarage. The cooker has also gone kaput, and now some of the electrics need attention. As you can imagine, cooking for a family of four on a two-ring camping stove has its limitations, but praise be to God for the Air-fryer!

Still, the inclement weather has not dampened the excitement that is buzzing around one of our churches as we prepare to begin our Diamond Jubilee celebrations on the Feast of Candlemas, our Feast of Dedication. Many conversations have been had about the events that we hope to hold

throughout the year. Recently, the Rector and I have spent some dedicated time reading through the log books that were written by the first Rector, detailing the first two decades of the parish's life. I have been inspired by the determination, ingenuity and faithfulness of the clergy and people who were sent out from one parish church to form another for a new district. It has been refreshing to reflect on, and celebrate, that a parish that has always rooted itself in the Catholic tradition was literally 'breaking new ground' years before the terms 'fresh expressions' and 'church plants' were in common parlance.

It is great to see that the theme for this year's Walsingham Youth Pilgrimage will centre around the theme of the Magnificat, entitled *Tell Out My Soul – Singing God's Praises*. As some tentative initial planning begins, we already have a few children signed up to accompany us on this great week of prayer and worship in England's Nazareth. Whilst August seems far away, I really do not think it is too premature to start praying for favourable weather now, after the horrendous storms that campers endured last year. And perhaps a candle or two for St Swithun.

Being the father of two children means that the vicarage kitchen cupboards are still well stocked with Christmas chocolate and other treats. One supposes that thoughts must now turn to how these can be eradicated swiftly, before the beginning of Lent, which is hurtling towards us at breakneck speed. And, before we know it, Easter eggs! **ND**

Fr Lewis Oliver-Hemmings-Faye is the Assistant Curate of The Holy Family, Failsworth, with St Luke, Lightbowne, and The Most Holy Trinity, Blackley

◆ THE WAY WE LIVE NOW ◆

Christopher Smith

What a difference a docu-drama makes! At last, thanks to ITV, the nation has woken up to the horrible series of miscarriages of justice involved in the prosecutions of hundreds of sub-postmasters up and down the country by their employer, Post Office Ltd. Some had nervous breakdowns, some were bankrupted, some committed suicide. This is a scandal that dates back a quarter of a century, and readers of *Private Eye* will recall seeing articles tucked away towards the back of the magazine over a long period of time. If you want to know more, look up their online article titled 'Justice lost in the post'. Here's how it starts:

Conceived in 1996 as one of the first private finance initiative contracts, the Horizon IT system had an unpromising start. It had been set up to create a swipe card system for payment of pensions and benefits from Post Offices. But, as with most mega-IT projects, it soon fell victim to over-ambition, management consultancy snake oil and the inability of a PFI contract to deliver a complex public service.

£700m later, it was axed in May 1999. 'Something had to be salvaged, however. So, against the better judgement of its IT specialists, the Post Office decided to use the system to transform its paper-based branch accounting into an electronic system covering the full range of Post Office services... As its board of directors ominously noted in its minutes that September: "Serious doubts over the reliability of the software remained".'

And so began the ghastly sequence of events which led to something like 900 sub-postmasters being convicted of theft, false accounting and fraud. The man whose role in the fight-back was featured in the ITV drama is called Alan Bates, and

his name is immortalised in a series of six numbered legal cases, the most important of which is cited as *Bates and others v Post Office Ltd (No 3)* [2019]. It turns on the matter of 'good faith' in English contract law.

In short, the Post Office had blamed thousands of its sub-postmasters — the guys who do the actual work on the ground — for accounting shortfalls that were actually being caused by the Horizon software. The magazine *Computer Weekly* picked it up, and published dozens of articles about it from 2009. As they explain, 'The losses didn't exist in the real world, just on the computer system, but sub-postmasters were forced to pay money to the Post Office to cover the phantom losses. Furthermore, *although the Post Office knew the system lacked integrity* [my italics], sub-postmasters were prosecuted for crimes of dishonesty based on its data.' Even so, as the judge in *Bates No 3* put it, 'The Post Office's stance was that the Claimants were responsible for these shortfalls, and... maintains it is for individual sub-postmasters to prove that the shortfalls were not their individual responsibility, and failing proof of that by an individual sub-post-master, then... the sub-postmaster in question would have to pay the relevant sum to the Post Office and face the consequences.'

Isn't it funny how incurious many people are nowadays? In 2007, a woman called Paula Vennells went to work for the Post Office, first as 'network director', then as managing director, then, from 2012, as chief executive. *Private Eye* calls her 'a retail veteran looking to protect the Post Office brand', and she had indeed had one of those portfolio careers. Even after she eventually resigned from the Post Office, she took up some lucrative non-executive directorships and became chairman of one of the London hospital trusts.

Why should we care? Well, for one thing, Mrs Vennells was a Church of England cleric. Having read languages at Bradford University, she trained on a course and had never run a parish, but in 2017, as the Crown Nominations Commission was swinging into action to find a successor to Richard Chartres, she found herself on the final shortlist of four to be named Bishop of London. After all, if you can run the Post Office, earning more per week than the annual stipend of the Archbishop of Canterbury, you can apparently run the biggest diocese in the country. That shortlist was an open secret in these parts, and, to nobody's surprise, Vennells came to address the diocesan conference that October, as we all snored gently in the debating chamber of Church House.

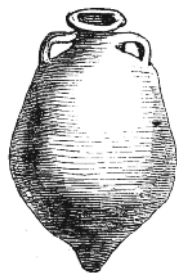
How is it that these people, who are paid vast sums of money to 'run things', are incapable of asking the right questions of the right people in the right way? It surely seemed implausible that suddenly hundreds of sub-postmasters had turned into fraudsters, never having raised suspicions in the past. Why would the incoming chief executive not dig and dig until she got to the bottom of it? And how, in heaven's name, did she land on the Church of England's Ethical Investment Advisory Group as late as March 2019, the very month in which *Bates No 3* was decided, with the Post Office having been heavily criticised in *Bates No 1* in November 2017 and in *No 2* in October 2018, in which the judge accused them of 'attempting to restrict evidence for public relations reasons'.

Serial plagiarist and underwhelming academic, Claudine Gay, recently resigned as President of Harvard University in the United States. How do these people get these jobs for which they are so spectacularly badly suited? Oh...

ND

◆ TREASURE IN CLAY JARS ◆

Festus



What else can be said about the Revd Paula Vennells that hasn't already been said? The *Mr Bates* tv programme triggered an online petition for her to be stripped of her CBE. It ticked up and up. When the counter exceeded a million signatures on 8 January, the announcement came she would be handing the honour back. The Bishop of St Alban's, in whose diocese she lives and has ministered, is the son of a former sub-postmaster. Ms Vennells was the only candidate on the shortlist to become the 133rd Bishop of London who was not already a bishop, or even in stipendiary ministry. In his 2018 book *Reimagining Britain*, Archbishop Welby credited her as someone who had 'shaped my thinking over the years'. She was also a speaker on one of the courses for training and forming bishops, and wrote a report exposing 'turf wars' in Church House. Perhaps the Archbishop might have had more success with another of his alleged picks for a top job. Back in 2014, the Revd Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint (trained on the Northern Ordination Course by correspondence whilst living in Hong Kong) was apparently the archiepiscopal preferred candidate to be the new Dean of Christ Church. It went instead to Martyn Percy. Both men are millionaires, although Lord Green's fortune came through banking (he chaired HSBC), and not litigation.

Congratulations to Archbishop Welby on the personal front. News of his award of the GCVO by HM the King in the New Year's Honours List was a front-page story. Also in the list was Danny Johnson, the epitome of transferable skills, who went from being in charge of catering at Lambeth Palace to become the Archbishop of Canterbury's Coronation Planning Director. He is appointed MVO, an appropriate honour considering his last-minute assistance the night before the ceremony, for a rehearsal with ABC in

the royal bedroom.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and of York have been advised by Professor Alexis Jay that she will publish her report this month around how to achieve full independence for Church safeguarding. There is still concern over the dismantling of the ISB (Independent Safeguarding Board) last year. But these acronyms can be problematic. A diocesan synod was being briefed on national developments only for one of its members to rise during the questions with a very clear statement: 'I don't know much about the ISB, but we could and should use the BCP more!'

There's a persistent concern that the Church of England keeps taking cues from the Episcopal Church of the USA, not least in its various themes, concerns, and initiatives. How encouraging, therefore, to discover in a recent survey that ECUSA's Sunday attendance decreased over the decade 2012-22 by 43%, which is more or less half considering how real numbers are often exaggerated. Just shy of half its members (49.5%) are over 65 years of age, not unlike its main presidential candidates. Joe Biden and Donald Trump are 81 and 77 respectively.

St Stephen's House, Oxford, has been getting in touch with its feminine side. The latest issue of its annual 'News' booklet (2023/24) has a lady on almost every page, and very fine they look too. Reports that the next edition will have its own 'girls in pearls' feature (for which there is much competition) are unfounded and mere speculation.

The *Calendario Romano* is 20 years old. Not the liturgical one, but

the annual black-and-white publication of handsome clergy, sold at stalls and in shops all around Rome and other religious cities. It is 'still going strong,' according to founder-photographer Piero Pazzi, even though he admits 'not all of the models are actually priests'. But in December, it seemed life was imitating art. 'Italy's Most Handsome Man', 21-year-old Edoardo Santini, announced he will leave behind his lucrative modelling career to train for the priesthood. His updated Instagram profile description (now over 30,000 followers) reads 'I'm a Christian, priest wannabe' and he's reportedly joined a seminary near Florence. 'At 21 years of age I find myself on the path towards becoming a priest, God willing. I've decided to give up modelling work, acting and dance. But I won't abandon all my passions, I'll just live them differently, offering them up to God.' Almighty God, give us priests.

An English bishop, Anglican eucharist, and Roman basilica. It's not the first time it has happened, but this year, on Thursday 25 January during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Archbishop Justin Welby entered the Basilica of San Bartolomeo all'Isola, wearing a chasuble and ready to preside and preach at an 'Anglican Eucharist'. Part of the ecumenical *Growing Together* summit, around 50 Roman Catholic and Anglican bishops were present, brought together by the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission. Later the same day, they gathered for Vespers at the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls to be commissioned by the Pope and ABC to engage in joint mission, witness and to promote theological agreement. Whoever arranged the locations seemed to have a sense of humour. San Bartolomeo is located on an island in the middle of Rome's main river. All in attendance had to cross the Tiber to get there. **ND**

◆ BOOKS ◆ ARTS ◆ CULTURE ◆

BOOKS

ANGLO CATHOLIC CHURCH PLANTING:

Can it Work?

John Wallace

Sacristy Press, 2023

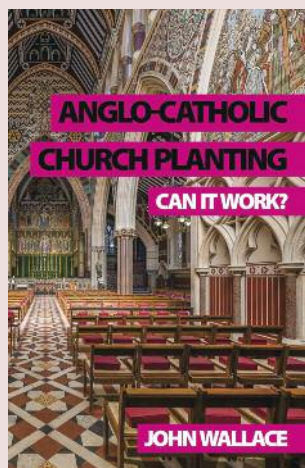
ISBN 9781789592979

At clergy chapter meetings up and down the country, talk of planting, or for that matter grafting or revitalising, much like the strivings to be simpler, humbler and bolder, produces quite ‘marmite’ responses in many. It is either evangelical over-managerial nonsense, or it is the ‘future’. What this doctoral thesis, now published as a book, first reminds us is that such concepts are neither of these things – they are indeed part of our history, whatever political grouping within the modern church we may or may not like to associate ourselves with, and confidence in the faith we have received and seeking to work out how best to share it and enable it to grow has, in the past at least, been demonstrably fruitful.

John Wallace begins with an exploration of Mission Shaped Church, locating at least some of its better intentions in the context of our Victorian predecessors. He then further unpacks the examples from Fr Richard Temple West and Mr Richard Foster in driving church planting in the Victorian period. He then explores three contemporary examples from within the ‘Anglo Catholic tradition’ (and he explains how he understands that term) where principles of Mission Shaped Church and Church Planting etc are at work, offering some reflection on their success or otherwise. Readers more inclined to intrigue might enjoy this book if only to try and figure out who the anonymised parishes and clergy are! Wallace then draws these studies together, highlighting the key themes he sees at the heart of fruitfulness (or oth-

erwise) in such endeavour, namely: worship (spirituality and beauty); community (welcome and mission); vision; leadership; intentional growth; and sustainability. And he further notes outside forces at work, not least from diocesan and other structures. The final four pages or so offer some challenges, and whilst they specifically relate to the matter of the thesis, namely church planting in the Anglo Catholic tradition, they inevitably pose questions that may be for The Society and Forward in Faith to pick up in due course – are we able to offer time, energy and resource to becoming effective in planting or revitalising churches, and what structures and support would we need to see established to achieve this?

Interestingly, John Wallace’s work comes on the back of a number of other pieces of pre-pandemic research, not least amongst them Tim Thorlby’s 2017 paper for The Centre for Theology and Community, *A Time to Sow – Anglican Catholic Church Growth in London*, and John Tomlinson’s research paper at St John’s Nottingham from 2020, *Time to Sow in the North – Report on Growth in Churches of the Catholic Tradition in the Province of York*. All three of these works point to the rich possibilities for this generation in not only rejoicing in the faith we have received and seeking to defend it from error, but also in seeking to work with the structures of the national church in putting ef-



fort and energy into growth, planting, grafting and revitalisation, and aligning our own structures and efforts accordingly, not least in co-ordinating the work of various Catholic societies in being the engine house that might drive such activity. All above my pay grade, but certainly a possible future if we want it enough.

John Wallace’s work was the thesis that won for him his PhD from Durham University, and could have been hidden away in the files on Palace Green (along with some of my meagre efforts at New Testament Greek as an undergraduate), but here in printed form it is a reminder to all of us that ‘the harvest is rich’, and our identity as Catholic Christians in the Anglican Communion and the Church of England is not simply about defending the faith we have received, but is about sharing, proclaiming and sowing the seeds of that faith to the glory of God and for the salvation of souls. We are being reminded of the opportunity that lies before us, and the possible work we might do to be best fitted for the task. As S Paul reminds us, ‘now is the favourable time, now is the day of salvation’. It fired me up, but then I quite like marmite!

Stephen Edmonds

LITURGY, THEURGY, & ACTIVE PARTICIPATION:

On Theurgic Participation in God

Kjetil Kringlebotten

Cascade Books, 2023

ISBN 9781666771268

The Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy famously expresses a desire for the faithful’s ‘active participation’ in the liturgy. But what exactly is ‘active participation’? Is it first and foremost practical – more people doing more stuff? Or is it primarily metaphysical, concerning our participation as human beings in the work of

God? Kjetil Kringlebotten, a parish priest in the Church of Norway, proposes *theurgy* as a framework for navigating these questions. In Greek antiquity, *theurgy* – literally ‘divine work’ – described a set of ritual practices by which the ‘theurgist’ sought to ascend to the level of the gods. Some early traditions of *theurgy* were more like magic or sorcery, ways of manipulating the gods in the theurgist’s favour. But later traditions began to conceive of the theurgist *participating* in an action that is primarily divine, already enacted by the gods.

It was this participatory *theurgy* that Pseudo-Dionysius brought into Christian theology, and the first half of Kringlebotten’s book surveys its influence in the works of Thomas Aquinas, Joseph Ratzinger and Catherine Pickstock. Though neither Aquinas or Ratzinger are explicitly theurgic, Kringlebotten convincingly presents their respective metaphysics of being and liturgy as grounded in participation. For Aquinas, we have our being only through participation in the being which God is. For Ratzinger, it naturally follows that liturgy is not something primarily enacted by us but fundamentally an act of God in which we can participate. Kringlebotten more fully fleshes out this metaphysics of participation in the second half of the book when discussing the incarnation and transubstantiation. Both doctrines are, for Kringlebotten, fundamentally about ‘consummation’ – enabling humanity and nature to become most fully that

which they are created to be.

Kringlebotten dubs Christ the ‘Master Theurgist’, as it is only through the incarnation – the union of human nature and divine nature ‘without confusion, change, division, or separation’ – that our participation in God *as humans* is possible. The Eucharist is therefore the ‘central act of Christian *theurgy*’ and Kringlebotten makes a compelling case that transubstantiation is the most appropriate way of understanding why. While the substance of the bread and wine is ‘displaced’ by the substance of the body and blood of Christ, the accidents of the bread and wine remain. In contrast to a Calvinist theology of the Eucharist, which dismisses the physicality of the bread and wine as nothing more than distractions from a purely spiritual contemplation of God, Kringlebotten argues that transubstantiation reveals the ultimate ‘telos’ of humanity and nature – to participate in God in all their physical and spiritual createdness.

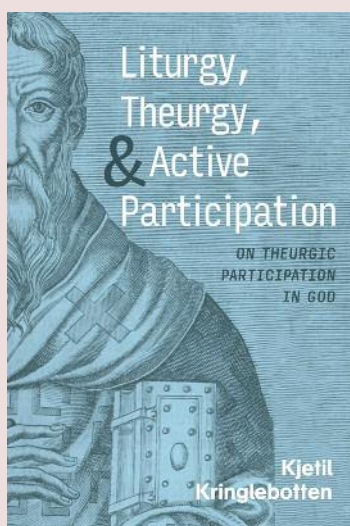
Pickstock, the final major theologian with whom Kringlebotten engages, is more explicitly theurgic, and Kringlebotten uses her work to further clarify the implications of *theurgy* for liturgy. Most useful is the distinction between two ‘modes of participation’ – *méthexis*, our fundamental participation in God by which we have our being and capacity to act, and *mím sis*, the ‘non identical and imitative ways’ we may express this fundamental participation. The complex interplay of *méthexis* and *mím sis* is illustrated by Pickstock’s reflection on the superficial ‘disorder’ (the *mím sis*) of some older rites, which points to the fundamental order of God in which the rite is grounded (the *méthexis*) by accentuating the human inability to grasp that order.

By his own admission, Kringlebotten’s book is ‘somewhat idealized’, focusing more on the fundamental *méthexis* as opposed to exploring every detail of how this is expressed in the *mím sis* of specific ‘celebrated liturgies’. In the final chapter, however, he opens some interesting lines of inquiry in this

direction by exploring the shortcomings of 21st-century liturgical reform in the Church of Norway. Kringlebotten criticises the reforms for prioritising the practicalities of ‘active participation’ and neglecting its metaphysical foundation. For Kringlebotten, these reforms overemphasise choice and flexibility and so lose sight of the fact that liturgy, as Ratzinger argues, is not something we humans make and design for our own individualistic pleasure but something God has given to us, to participate in as one holy, catholic and apostolic church.

Kringlebotten concludes this last chapter illustrating how the liturgies themselves have retained their theurgic character in spite of the reforms, a hopeful affirmation of the fact that liturgy, as a living gift from God, continues to grow and thrive even when we fundamentally mishandle it. But this raises a further question: if liturgy is indeed like a plant that grows naturally and organically, how do all those who participate in it nurture rather than hinder its growth when faced with those practical questions of which Eucharistic Prayer to use, which language, which musical setting, and so on? Kringlebotten’s theurgic framework is highly useful in reorienting our priorities towards the primary metaphysical foundation of liturgy. In the light of this foundation, however, more work – perhaps a never-ending work – is still needed to explore the secondary practicalities of liturgy that have been placed in our care.

Nathan Brooks



MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION AND THE ORIGINS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Robin Baker

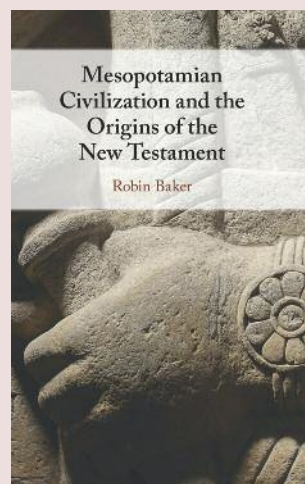
Cambridge University Press, 2022 ISBN 9781009098946

New Testament scholars are generally content to swim in the waters of Greek, Roman and Second Temple Jewish sources. Yet there are hints in parts of the New Testament of influences from further east.

Matthew's genealogical use of gematria, portentous dreams and magi with astrological interests provides one cluster of examples, while the mystifying visions of John of Patmos offer several more. In this substantial work of scholarship, Robin Baker makes a sustained argument in favour of Mesopotamian (Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian) influence on various sections of the New Testament canon.

Given the sensational maximalist claims made by some previous scholars, Baker's approach is carefully nuanced. His opening chapter casts the net wide, seeking to identify possible sources and conduits for Mesopotamian influence, in the religious landscape of the Near East. Chapter 2 then firms up potential channels by which such traditions might have been transmitted to early Christian scholars, and possible motives for their incorporating these into their writings. Baker proposes three such channels. The first is indirect, via the Hebrew Bible and ongoing work of Judean scribes. A second channel would be the more diffuse absorption by Israel of a Mesopotamian epistemology. More boldly, however, Baker also argues for direct knowledge of Mesopotamian traditions by some New Testament authors, perhaps through sources such as Berossus' *Babyloniaca*, which was certainly used by contemporary Jewish scholars, including Josephus. This last claim breaks new ground, challenging a Eurocentric emphasis on Hellenization in New Testament scholarship, which Baker believes has significantly distorted the evidence.

His third chapter sets out his reasons for thinking that Mesopotamian epistemology has left its mark on at least some of the earliest Christian theologians. Preachers may be intrigued by his treatment of Christ's call of his first four disciples, the fishermen Peter and Andrew, James and John, who will later be recipients of privileged teaching within the Synoptic Gospels. He proposes a plausible correspondence with Mesopotamian tradition which con-



nects water, fish, and the transmission of transcendent knowledge.

But the proof of the Mesopotamian pudding is in the exegetical eating. Subsequent chapters therefore explore specific traditions and motifs, ranging from models of kingship to myths relating to specific deities—Ninurta, Marduk, Ištar and Nabû—as test cases for potential influence. Baker's analysis is careful and nuanced. Some traditions, he believes, are transmitted indirectly through the Hebrew Bible, such as the parody of Ninurta myths in the Abimelech narrative of Judges 9. But Baker makes a robust case for direct influence in certain cases, such as Revelation and the Gospels of Matthew and John. This is certainly historical plausible. He demonstrates that Mesopotamian sources were accessible in Aramaic and even Greek, that Babylonian learning was widely valued at the turn of the Christian era, and that the cults of Nabû, Marduk, Tammuz and Ištar remained part of the regional landscape.

A few select examples from the Apocalypse of John demonstrate the value of his work. Revelation's interest in the Euphrates is often explained in terms of first century politics, as the contemporary boundary between Rome and the Parthians. Yet in mythology, the river was also Mesopotamia's symbolic border, beyond which there was chaos. John of Patmos draws upon this tradition, but reverses it, Babylon now being on the side of chaos. Similarly, Baker's suggestion that the joint throne of God and the Lamb recalls the sacred seat shared

by Marduk and his son Nabû is more satisfying than the frequent appeal to the Roman *bisellium* or double-seat. Third, the Lamb's book of life with names inscribed 'from the foundation of the world' (Rev 17:8) recalls the Babylonian 'tablet of destinies'.

Also illuminating is Baker's attention to the provenance of New Testament texts, their authors and recipients. Locating Matthew's Gospel in Syria immediately exposes the evangelist to a wider range of traditions than Hellenistic or Roman. Hence it is unsurprising to find Chaldean traditions relating to gematria, astrology, and dream interpretation so readily displayed. The Colossians' 'heresy' emerges in Phrygia, an area historically governed by Assyria and more recently populated by Jewish communities from Babylon. This potentially sheds fresh light on the interpretation of the Colossians 'hymn' (Col 1.15-20). Baker even makes the plausible suggestion that, given the author of Revelation's familiarity with Hebrew and Aramaic, and fascination with Babylon, he may have come from eastern Syria or even the Mesopotamian diaspora.

At 360-plus pages, this book is not for the faint-hearted. Yet for those willing to persevere, it repays careful reading page after page. It showcases the author's substantial learning which spans multiple Ancient Near Eastern cultures as well as broad scholarship on both biblical Testaments. Some of his specific proposals are more convincing than others. Rome's legendary status as the city of seven hills is sufficient explanation to the seven heads of the beast (Rev 17.9-10), without Baker's further appeal to John's knowledge of the ziggurat Etemenanki, which had loomed over Babylon centuries before. Nonetheless, Baker has sufficient demonstrated, with considerable detail and erudition, that significant light may be shed on the New Testament writings through looking eastward from Jerusalem, and not merely to the West.

Ian Boxall

PASSIONS OF THE SOUL

Rowan Williams

Bloomsbury, 2024 ISBN
9781399415682

The Church in the West is in trouble. Numbers decline steadily. In the Anglican churches solutions to this problem of decline get more and more bizarre and have no lasting effect. They also depart from tradition. Our Catholic heritage is tossed aside. The central part of that heritage, prayer and the worship of God have become largely subjective and sentimental. Prayer for most people seems to be doing what makes me feel good. This is no basis on which one can live the Christian life, particularly in its Catholic form.

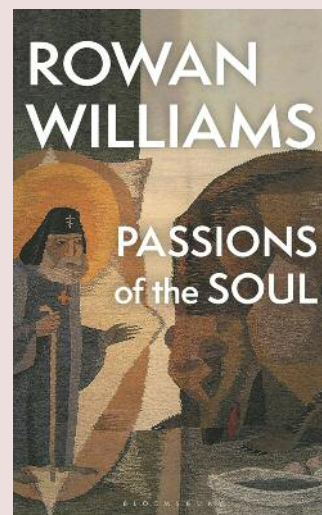
Rowan Williams is one of the few Anglican leaders who really understands this. In this slim but solid book he turns again to the East for inspiration. Eastern Orthodox prayer is still rooted in the earliest traditions of prayer before the tragic division between spiritual life and theology took place. Theology is profoundly prayerful, and you cannot pray effectively to God unless you have some theological idea about who that God is.

In this book, Rowan focuses on the passions which underlie all that we do. Understanding and controlling these passions is essential in

Christian life. Passions, the feelings that drive our lives, are rooted in good movements of the spirit: love, desire, a concern for justice. Yet, we corrupt them. We use them for ourselves. Rowan shows how the East has understood these passions, and how they become sinful. He uses the teaching particularly of Evagrius and Cassian to explore these passions. Both these writers show an extraordinary understanding of human psychology. We tend to think psychology began with Freud. That is far from true. Evagrius and John Cassian can teach us a lot, and their understanding of psychology is founded in God. Origen and Gregory of Nyssa also make significant appearances, as do Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux and John of the Cross.

An interesting aspect of the book is that Rowan links the Passions of the East with the Beatitudes to illuminate them both. As Rowan himself admits, some of these links are a bit tenuous, but they usefully challenge us to think more deeply about the Beatitudes and the Passions.

One of the fallacies of modern life is the idea that you can have spirituality without religion. Rowan challenges this from the start. For Christians, spirituality obviously involves the Holy Spirit. In the West we probably still do not take this seriously enough, despite decades of



the charismatic movement. The result is that our prayer becomes merely intellectual or emotional and isn't properly integrated into the whole Christian experience of life. Then of course prayer should not be primarily about us, but about God. In a final chapter Rowan explores the relationship of prayer to the Holy Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is not merely a theoretical way of explaining God; prayer takes us into the heart of the Trinity. We need to understand something of that mystery so we know where we are going.

Read this book slowly, maybe for Lent, and it will deepen and enlarge the way you pray. The Church desperately needs us all to pray with the greater depth and maturity to which Bishop Rowan invites us.

Nicolas Stebbing CR



The Dean and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral and
the Bishop of Fulham seek to appoint a

Vicar

**for the Benefice of St Silas the Martyr and Holy
Trinity with St Barnabas, Kentish Town**

*The parish has passed a Resolution under the House of
Bishops' Declaration.*

<https://www.ssilas.co.uk> <https://www.htkt.co.uk>

For the parish profile and application form please
contact the Bishop of Fulham's Office:
fulham.chaplain@london.anglican.org 020 7932 1130

We seek to appoint a Priest who will:

- Lead us in a Christian life that is deeply rooted in the Sacraments
- Provide spiritual leadership and guidance through the practice and teaching of our faith
- Be a good shepherd and pastor
- Be an effective communicator with our children and with our school
- Be visible and active in the streets of the parish, providing recognition, acceptance and engagement
- Have a good awareness of the practical and financial aspects of managing our property
- Be comfortable with technology and social media and aim to develop our presence in this area.

Closing date for applications: Monday 4th March 2024

Parish visits and Interviews: Friday 22nd March 2024

The Diocese of London is committed to creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workforce which represents our context and wider community. We are aware that those of Global Majority Heritage/United Kingdom Minority Ethnic (GMH/UKME) and disabled people are currently under-represented among our clergy and workforce, and we particularly encourage applications from those with the relevant skills and experience that will increase this representation.

ART

IMPRESSIONISTS ON PAPER: Degas to Toulouse-Lautrec

Royal Academy, London
until 10th March, 2024

There is little time to see this show. Opening dates, publication dates and Christmas conspired against an earlier review. Plus Holbein [review to appear next issue], which is ironic, since the Academy's show argues that the it was the Impressionists who first saw that finished drawings on paper might be exhibited as the equal to paintings. Holbein, of course, is known as much for his drawings as his paintings. Most likely he made drawings on the hoof (Anne Boleyn?) as did the Impressionists. Some of his drawings were intended to be the finished article, even if they don't look much different from drawings preparatory to particular paintings. Michelangelo also made presentation drawings, which, even if they were not as valuable as the frescos of the Sistine Chapel were highly regarded in themselves.

So it goes on. The argument for the show needs to be developed. In the meantime, there's much pleasure to be had enjoying these often fragile works – one reason why oil paintings had (and still have) greater prestige was because they are more robust and easier to exhibit.

The show is dominated by Degas. In an age of new possibilities, Degas experimented with laid paper, tracing paper, acid green paper, cardboard. He used oils, inks, chalks. And his work, even of exhausted-looking dancers, is filled with energy. His 'Woman combing her hair' from the National Gallery is the most frequently displayed work in the show. It's physically bigger and stronger than many of the other works and it is literally a highlight. Much smaller, from the collection of the Swiss dealer David Lachenmann (well-represented at Burlington House), is 'Two dancers resting'. This is taken from one of Degas' unusual angles, high and to

the right of the two dancers. The dancers are fixed in the picture by the diagonal lines of floorboards. They lean forward, in white tutus, their backs towards us. Black charcoal suggests both the stiffness of the corset and, with added white chalk, the soft, density of the tutu. Each dancer has a small bunch of red flowers behind the left ear. The red is worthy of Turner or Hals. It is a perfectly executed sketch.

Two more pieces by Degas are equally eye-catching; one, literally so. It is a very small sketch in oil over graphite on paper of 'Lyda, Woman with a pair of binoculars'. There are more famous, worked-up versions in the Burrell and in New York. And it is possible the woman in question is Lydia Cassatt, sister of Mary Cassatt, herself represented with a splendid pastel on paper of Marie-Thérèse Gaillard. The Degas is a picture which draws the viewer in through the direct gaze of the woman, the binoculars hiding her face. If not sinister, it is certainly disturbing. Degas is never simply a cheerful colourist.

The other compelling picture by Degas is equally brown, lit with scraps of white. The Courtauld's 'Woman at a window' (1870-1) is made in oils diluted with turps, on paper laid on canvas. It shows a well-dressed woman turning her face from us and out through an apartment window. It is a sombre work, perhaps reflecting the

Franco-Prussian War.

Degas is by no means the only painter in the show, though his work is of a consistently high quality. There are works by Van Gogh – see especially 'Fortifications of Paris with houses' using graphite, water colour, black chalk and gouache on paper to create a vibrant colour almost as rich as his oils of the same time – Monet, Seurat, Pissarro, Renoir, Sisley (not good), Morisot, Manet. Cézanne and Odilon Redon hang side by side which makes Redon look more peculiar (or mystic) than usual.

And there's works by Toulouse-Lautrec. Here was an artist born to make louche use of crayons and paper. 'Woman with a black boa' (diluted oil on cardboard) crackles with energy and a life lived after sun-down. The face is characterful in the way of an old stage artist. The clothing is articulated with bravura flourishes. Alongside is 'Two Friends' (1895), gouache on cardboard. This is one of a series of pictures Toulouse-Lautrec made of women, who were most likely dancers/prostitutes. Though not as explicit as some – and certainly not as explicit as, say, Sickert – the picture combines both humanity with a frank recognition of the girls' work.

The show is an Assistant Curator's egg, but the good parts are very good.

Owen Higgs



Edgar Degas, *Dancers on a Bench*, c. 1898. Pastel on tracing paper. Lent by Glasgow Life (Glasgow Museums) on behalf of Glasgow City Council. Photo: © CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection

◆POEM◆

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

by W.B. Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

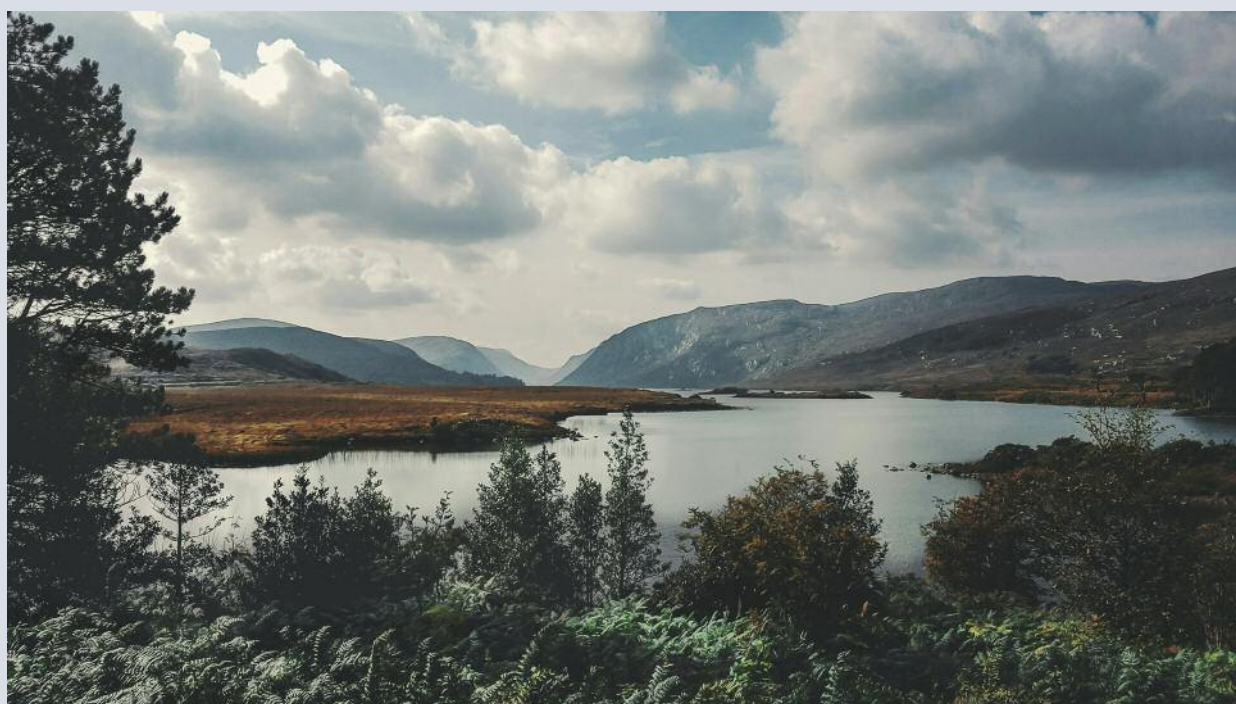
And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was something of a 'professional Irishman' Though born there, at Sandymount, Dublin, his father moved the family to London when William was only two. His Celtic fill had to come from summer holidays in Sligo, on Ireland's west coast, until the family returned there to live when he was 15. There is perhaps a clue there also, for Sligo connects the north (Ulster) with Connacht and the south of Ireland. Yeats too was a bridge, between Ireland and England, Catholic and Protestant, ancient and modern. At the beginning of his career he knew the high Victorian Oscar Wilde. Later he came into contact with James Joyce. His life and work spanned those distinctive spheres. Like George

Bernard Shaw, he was of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, although far more committed to the cause of Irish nationalism and self-determination. As director of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, Yeats corroborated his place in the Irish Literary Revival Movement. In 1922 he was appointed Senator for the Irish Free State, and in December 1923 was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature; bridging again, between politics, statehood, art and culture.

Yeats was undoubtedly a spiritualist and became mixed-up in certain occultist meetings and ideas, but he was also fluent in the Christian faith. It fitted with his idea of medieval Ireland, and stimulated his intellect. Gaelic mythology, Irish identity, and artistic integrity all mattered to him. 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' is early Yeats and was published in 1890. It's a poem of three quatrains and original in style, reaching for a voice more Irish than of England. Essentially, the first section concerns physical needs; the second deals with the spirit and peace; and the third is interiority, memory and inner stillness – even when recalled in the midst of some other busy location. For Lent, it conjures an idea of desert wilderness, and the areas to which we might pay closer attention through self-examination: body, spirit, heart and soul. **ND**



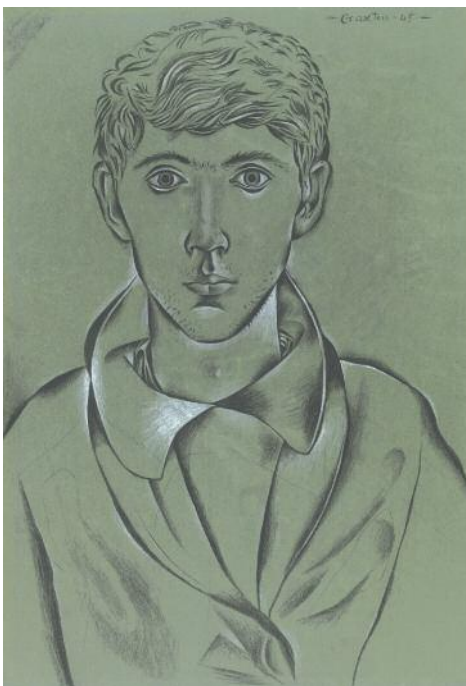
The Art in Pilgrimage

Elisabeth Angwin makes an aesthetic and spiritual tour of Chichester Cathedral

Chichester Cathedral could be described as a mini art gallery in its own right. And, like all small galleries, the choice is not bewildering but encourages time to sit, to let the art soak in, to contemplate, meditate. It might even make for a good Lenten exercise to settle down in front of a piece of art and let it work. The Tate has researched the average time a visitor spends in front of a picture: eight (eight!) seconds. To lengthen this acquaintance with a picture or sculpture, the Tate recommends *Slow Looking*, suggesting that ‘your mind will try and make connections between elements of the work. These connections might be intended by the artist, or unique to you. It doesn’t matter, both are valid.’ Every artist, composer, poet knows that the moment their work sees the light of day publicly, it takes on a life of its own – and why not? For that reason, I will try not to tell you what to feel or think.

In the middle of the twentieth century, Bishop Bell and Dean Hussey both installed pieces of modern art in the cathedral and, in the 1980s, Hussey donated his own modern art collection to start off Chichester’s own gallery in a Queen Anne house, Pallant House, five minutes away from the cathedral. The bond between the two institutions is as strong as ever: until 18 April, the cathedral’s North Transept serves as an extension to Pallant House. It is exhibiting Craxton’s huge tapestry, *Landscape with the Elements*, which measures approximately 4m by 5.25m (13 feet by 17 feet). This is hardly a size to fit into a domestic building but quite at home in a cathedral that comfortably displays Piper’s Trinity tapestry at the High Altar and Benker-Schirmer’s post-war ‘Reconciliation’ tapestry at St Richard’s Shrine.

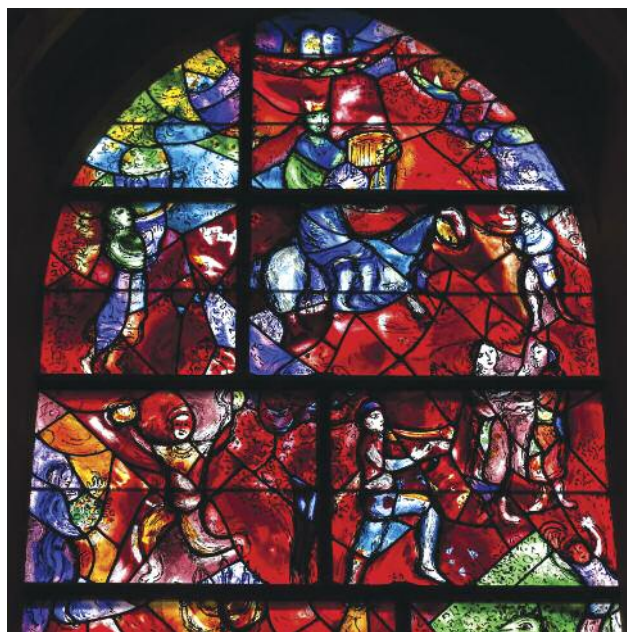
There is a comfortable bench in front of the Craxton tapestry from which to enjoy his delight in creation, his burst of sunshine, his delicate patterns. The tapestry is carefully lit: it is on loan from Stirling University, where it hangs in a darkened room to preserve the 500 (yes, 500) delicate colours. The six weavers took eighteen months to complete this monumental and intricate work, and they are given due credit with their initials woven into its bottom right-hand corner. Banished from Crete during the ‘time of the Colonels’, Craxton was living in exile in Edinburgh. He thus could oversee the weavers’ progress in the Dovecot Studios. He was full of longing for all he was



John Craxton, self-portrait, 1945 NPG 6177
(c) National Portrait Gallery, London

missing, away from his beloved Crete: sun, heat, golden light, fauna and flora, magical moonlit nights and above all his beloved goats. Immersed in Greek myths, earth, air, fire and water are carefully woven (in all senses of the word) into the design. John Piper in Chichester’s High Altar tapestry of 1966 also incorporates the four Greek elements. His ‘air’ shows the sensation of the sixties: sputniks! It is fascinating to contrast and compare the two; Piper’s shapes being abstract, Craxton’s using easily recognised shapes in an abstract design. Piper described designing his tapestry as ‘in some ways the most frightening commission I ever undertook’. But Craxton had long been influenced by Byzantine mosaics and he took to tapestry work like a duck to water.

Now to move on to contemplate the Cathedral’s two permanent tapestries. Behind the High Altar hangs Piper’s bright (recently cleaned) tapestry that vividly makes its presence felt, even back at the West door. Dean Hussey had disliked the High Altar’s dark backdrop of a Tudor screen and commissioned Piper to fill its seven panels, each five metres high, one metre wide. Taking the theological advice of a clerical friend, Piper designed an abstract pattern of the Trinity in the centre. God is shown



Chagall window



Chichester Cathedral (Dan Edwards)

as a circular sun; the Son by a Tau Cross; and the Holy Spirit by many flames of fire. The Holy Trinity is unified by a triangle. The four outer panels, two each side, represent the four Elements and at the base he put the symbols of the four Gospel writers. Piper closely supervised its weaving by Pinton Frères at Felletin near Aubusson and then it was finished – except, sadly, all was not sweetness and light among the Chapter. Suffice to say, at the service in 1966 to celebrate its hanging, one of the canons processed in dark glasses to show his disapproval of the ‘inappropriate’ (nay, *vulgar*) burst of colour. Today it continues to bring a visual and spiritual focus to services.

The shrine to St Richard lies behind the High Altar in the Retro Quire and is also dominated by a bright tapestry, again recently been cleaned. It was woven in 1985 in Germany by Benker-Schirmer (centre panel) and in West Sussex by West Dean (side panels) in a style different from Craxton’s or Piper’s. It consists of very abstract symbols in a blaze of an explosion to express St Richard’s life in Chichester. Saint Richard is to be recognised by his signature chalice. He once dropped it; miraculously it spilt not a drop but remained upright. His chalice is to be found in the centre of the design. A nice detail of his episcopal life is he taught his clergy how to graft fig trees (the authenticity of bishops in those days)! Look out for the fig leaves in the tapestry. The Shrine is a good place to kneel, let the shapes immerse you and contemplate. Many like to light a candle.

With Lent coming up, it might be a good exercise to walk the length of the cathedral’s long South Aisle starting in the Baptistry with the baptism of Christ; then mid-way to the raising of Lazarus; and thirdly at the east end with the risen Christ, three key moments from His earthly ministry. In 1951 for the Baptistry, Bishop Bell commissioned the cathedral’s first piece of modern art: Hans Feibusch’s *Baptism of Christ*. In Hitler’s Germany, Feibusch had produced ‘degenerate work’ and so fled to England where Bell both befriended and commissioned work for him. Of Jewish heritage, Feibusch converted to Christianity in England, then reverted back to his

Jewish faith in very old age. His *Baptism of Christ* is informed by Piero della Francesca’s painting on the same subject in the National Gallery. He said he wanted ‘a strongly modelled panel, with large forms, easily readable and strong in colour in the dim light. The colour is based on the grey-green of the Cathedral stone, which helps to relate to my painting to the surroundings; contours and deep shadows are black or mahogany, and there are some patches of yellow and orange, in the background, of bright blue.’ He aimed to ‘lead the worshipper’s thoughts from the tumultuous outer world towards an *inner spiritual one, and to serve as a point of departure for his meditations.*’ Weekly as I walk back from Communion, I am moved by it.

Later on in 1983, to complement Feibusch’s painting on the West wall, the sculptor John Skelton carved a font in dark green polyphant from Bodmin Moor and polished it up to reveal its latent colours. The font’s bowl is a vivid beaten copper and repeats Feibusch’s ‘patches of yellow and orange’ nearby.

Next, walking eastwards along the south Aisle and away from the start of Christ’s ministry, is an episode from the story of Lazarus, foreshadowing His Resurrection. According to Pevsner and many others, the Relief is the jewel in the Cathedral’s crown. Both Eric Gill and Henry Moore as young men were hugely influenced by it. In his later years, Craxton said, ‘I owe to Chichester Cathedral (from my choirboy days) a Pauline conversion to what I still most emphatically call art’. It depicts Lazarus emerging from his tomb still bound by grave clothes. The Purbeck stone has been partly scorched pink by a Medieval fire in the Cathedral. As was the convention in Anglo-Saxon art, the most important person (here Christ) is the largest; the least important figures, two miserable, toothless gravediggers, the smallest. But it is the faces that Pevsner and others select: exceptionally for Anglo-Saxon art, Mary and Martha’s faces are full of



Byzantine mosaic influence

emotion, showing an incredible mixture as they register what has happened. Come for yourself to interpret their expressions.

At the eastern end of the long south aisle, the Mary Magdalene Chapel has embroidered kneelers and an altar rail in stippled aluminium (by Geoffrey Clarke, as is the pulpit, lectern). Here is a moment to kneel in comfort and meditate in front of Graham Sutherland's *Noli me Tangere*, 'Do not touch me'. This was the first piece of modern art Dean Hussey commissioned in 1961 for the cathedral: he had waited six years for the chance. When Vicar of St Matthew's, Northampton, Hussey had approached Sutherland to produce a tortured, Grünewald-type crucifixion, so he knew who to ask. Two versions of *Noli me Tangere* were delivered for Hussey to choose



Initials of weavers

from – the second is on display in Pallant House. Mary Magdalene is reaching out to touch the risen Christ, having mistaken him for the gardener. Rembrandt had given Christ a wide gardener's hat so Sutherland does the same this time, a straw creation borrowed from the local vicar! Mary, all woman, bottom sticking out in a green clinging dress, reaches out to him as Christ climbs heavenwards up the steps that Sutherland had copied from the outside of his Mediterranean house. Sutherland, a devout Roman catholic, was imagining 'What if Christ appeared in my garden?' it tells us. As with Piper's tapestry's colours, Sutherland's warm brightness (terracotta, turquoise hues) hold their own, and can be understood from

a distance. Unusually for Sutherland – who majored in tortured, spikey shapes – the painting is of paradise: warm, lush, luxuriant.

If your eye has wandered at all as you kneel, (the Tate apparently permits distractions,) you may have enjoyed the calligraphy of the memorial to Walter Hussey, whose ashes are buried nearby. The Latin is a quotation from St Augustine, 'The Word is, in the manner of speaking, the art of the Almighty and Wise God.' The same sculptors, Alec and Fiona Peever, carved the memorial in the North Transept to Gustav Holst who, at Bishop Bell's invitation, came every Whitsun to Chichester to make music.

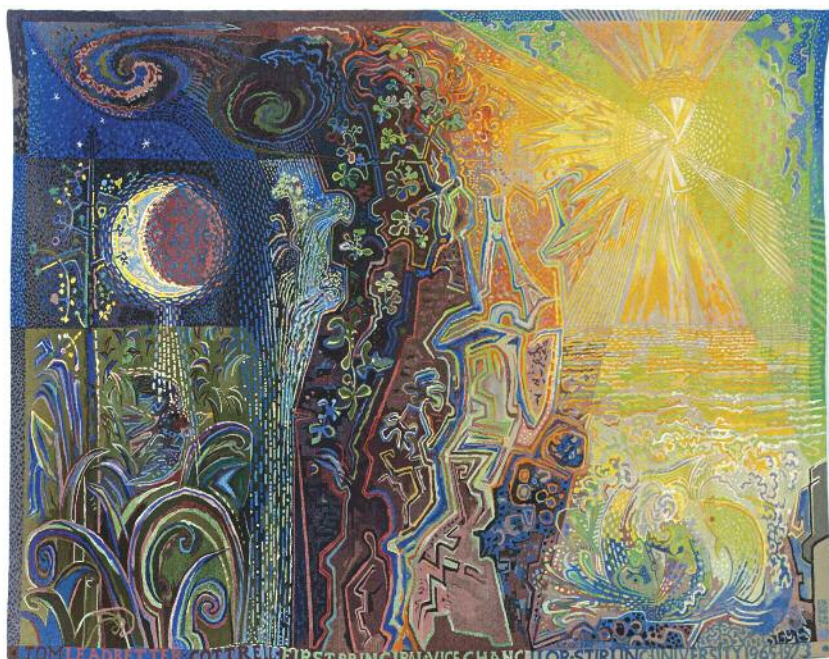
Let's end on as joyous a note as we began. In the cathedral's north-west corner, Hussey, as he retired in 1977, commissioned a window by Marc Chagall.



Detail of Mary and Martha

fect bridge between Chagall's Jewish faith and Christianity: *O praise God in his holiness... let everything that hath breath praise the Lord*. Usually choosing a blue background, Chagall went for a triumphant red here, a difficult colour to work with but Chagall triumphs (in my view, at least). Picasso famously said, 'When Matisse dies, Chagall is the only painter left who understands what colour really is.' The stained glass was manufactured by Charles Marq in Rheims. The window lifts me every time I see it, if only because it is pure Chagall: a cat-faced King David plays a harp while sitting on a happy donkey; animals 'praise him with the sound of the trumpet' and with 'stringed instruments'; a person with a book 'praises him with the psalter'; figures 'praise him with the timbrel and dance'; they leap with 'loud cymbals', the 'high-sounding cymbals'. Everything that hath breath is indeed full of praise here.

Chichester is not, of course, the only place to do *Slow Looking*. Chagall's figures are good, involving good note on which to end – be it a visit here, on your own 'slow looking' somewhere. But wherever and however, I commend this very much for consideration as part of your Lenten meditation this year. **ND**



JOHN CRAXTON: Tapestry 1976 – 'Landscape with the Elements'
Chichester Cathedral in conjunction with Pallant House, until 18 April 2024

Obituaries

FATHER DAVID CHISLETT SSC (1952-2023)

Fr David Chislett was larger than life. Big-hearted, full of generosity for everyone around him, he could hold court with the powerful and influential, but grew in stature when he reached out to the poor and those in strife.

Dr Nigel Zimmerman, now Director of Catholic Mission and Identity in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, recalls ‘a long evening in which Fr David hosted dinner for young adults, spent dessert, coffee and hours of conversation hearing questions and concerns and discussing history, poetry and theology, revelling around the piano, throwing in a bit of relationship and career advice into the mix, and made us feel inspired, heard and answered. He did not treat young people as a strange novelty to adjust to, but as the rich presence of people in need of hope and meaning.’

Those pastoral qualities exemplified the essence of his vocation and ministry. The burning desire to bring people to know the love of Jesus Christ and to live out that love in their own lives and relationships with others.

I followed Fr David as Priest in Charge of All Saints, Buninyong and Chaplain to the University of Ballarat. Characteristically Fr David gave up these roles to answer the call to serve as Rector of the great Anglo-Catholic shrine parish of All Saints, Wickham Terrace, in Brisbane.

Ordained in the Diocese of Ballarat by the legendary +John Hazlewood (uncle of the Bishop of Lewes!) Fr David served in a number of parishes and made a significant contribution to the wider Diocese and was a major player in ARCIC engagements developing a close friendship with George Pell. As a member of the Bishop Selection Committee Fr David played a significant role in securing the election of David Silk to succeed John Hazlewood.

SSC was an important part of his priestly life and Fr David served as Australian Provincial Secretary and he was a significant participant in International Synods of SSC.

It was my privilege to offer him hospitality at St Luke’s and he was always a totally supportive colleague and friend. He always walked humbly before the Lord. Deposed from his beloved All Saints, Wickham Terrace, by a vindictive prelate and kangaroo court Fr David was full of forgiveness, even to the point of great self-suffering because of those who opposed his ministry.

That was a key to his service – he would keep loving and forgiving people anyway, much to the

worry of his friends who did not want to see him suffer. In worship, he had a simple conviction that the sacraments were the doorways of grace, and his calling was to take everyone around him to those doorways, and show them a little glimpse of heaven. In this sense, he was an authentic evangelistic catholic Christian.

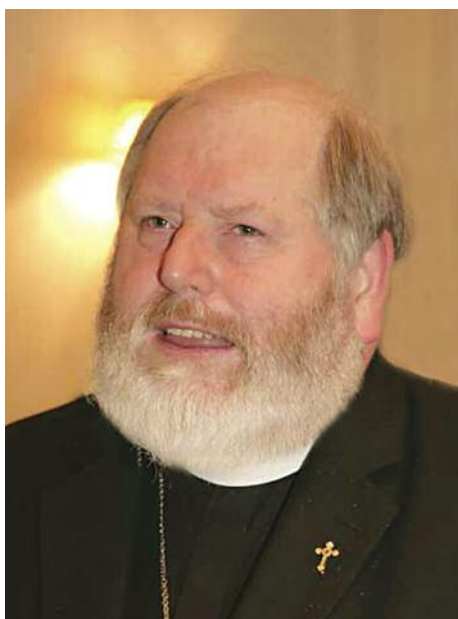
His commitment in the Anglican world was not well understood by everyone around him, but it made sense when you considered that his calling was not ultimately to be a theologian or a bishop (both ministries in which he was a fine contributor), but a pastor and an evangelist. His heart was often weary, but never wavered. And whatever episodes of darkness and difficulty passed over him, he was a man of Christian joy in the tradition of Pusey and Newman, Mascall, Thérèse of Lisieux, and the great missionary priests of the Oxford movement. The missionary impulse was borne in him of Jesus, despite the cost.

*Fr Martin Hislop DL SSC
Vicar of St Luke’s, Kingston-upon-Thames*

I first met Fr David Chislett in the mid-1990s, when he arrived unannounced at Forward in Faith’s Office in Faith House, Westminster. He explained that he was Rector of one of Australia’s leading Anglo-Catholic Churches – All Saints, Wickham Terrace, in Brisbane – and he wished to know whether it could affiliate with FiF in the same way that many English Churches had. I assured him that an annual subscription of just £50 would achieve that end, and so All Saints became the first FiF Parish in the Southern Hemisphere! To celebrate this earth-shattering moment, he promised to buy me a beer a few weeks later when we would both be at the National Pilgrimage to Walsingham.

Sure enough, he accosted me outside the Bull, and bought me a pint. We talked, and I introduced him to various folk. More drink was taken – until he asked me the location of the nearest Cash Machine. I explained that it was on the coast, some 5 miles to the north. He wondered if I could go there for him to withdraw some money, for he was running a little short. As it happened, my wife and I were staying there, so I had to admit it was a feasible idea – at which point he handed over (to a relative stranger!) his card and PIN, assuring me that the next morning would be soon enough...

Over subsequent years, we kept in touch. He telephoned one day in early 2000 to tell me that he wished to concelebrate at *Christ our Future*, our extraordinary ‘Celebration of the new Millennium’ – thus



MARGARET JOAN WHITE MBE (1933-2023)

Margaret was born in Newcastle in 1933. Evacuated to Wallington Hall in Northumberland during the war, she returned to Newcastle and trained as a shorthand typist at Skerry's College. After her marriage to Tom she worked in Winnipeg, but was homesick and so she returned to England. I first met her in the early 1980s at St John the Baptist, Grainger Street, Newcastle where she was a regular worshipper, not only at on Sundays but midweek, especially the early mass on Fridays at 7.30am.

Tom and she were great hosts and there were frequent parties, first at their home on Roman Way and then at Blayney Row. The death of their son Stephen at a young age was a great blow to her and as result of this she founded the Newcastle branch of The Compassionate Friends, which cares for bereaved parents and their families. For this work she was awarded the MBE in 2012.

In 2010 it was proving difficult to find a Catholic lay candidate to stand for General Synod for the diocese. Margaret agreed to stand and was elected and so she was one of the laity who in 2012 defeated the first legislation to permit women bishops. Only because of that defeat did we end up with the 2014 settlement and mutual flourishing for those with opposing views.

All who knew her will remember that she was not afraid to say what she thought – often with colourful language. There would be a collective intake of breath when she stood to speak at General Synod as we wondered what might come out, but she never disgraced herself.

Her funeral requiem at St John's (sung to Darke in F) was attended by the Bishop of Richborough and many friends from different aspects of her life. The communion hymn 'Sweet Sacrament divine' was very appropriate for a faithful woman who was fed regularly by the sacraments. May she rest in peace.

Fr Paul Benfield SSC

beating most of the English clergy who wished to take part, but who seemed less than able to be in touch much before six or so weeks before the event.

And then, early in 2001, he telephoned to say that I would receive a call from an Archdeacon in South Australia, who wished to invite me – on behalf of his bishop – to speak at their upcoming Diocesan Conference. And so a trip Down Under of some six weeks came together: a Diocesan Conference, and then a week with my wife, cultivating a love of the wines of the Barossa Valley, followed by a tour of the entire country, addressing nascent FiF meetings with Fr Geoffrey Kirk, and finally an opportunity to witness the General Synod of the Australian Anglican Church in action, as it failed to agree a proposal to ordain women as bishops. And all under the thoughtful and inspired direction of Fr Chislett.

No matter what FiF Australia did, the College of Bishops was determined that there would be no provision for those in conscience unable to receive the innovation of women priests and bishops. Fr Chislett took steps to address the position, which in turn cost him his beloved parish. He soldiered on in Queensland for a while, before seeking out his old friend Fr Martin Hislop in Kingston-on-Thames.

And then, in 2017, I was asked to write a Reference in connection with his application to be appointed Vicar of All Saints, Benhilton. Re-reading what I wrote six years after the event, I am bound to say that I must have hit some nail or other on the head, for he got the job! – for which I give thanks, just as I do for his inspiration, friendship and pastoral care over more than a quarter of a century.

*Stephen Parkinson
Director of Forward in Faith (1993-2012)*

Father David Chislett was blessed with a pastoral heart in proportion to his build. A man and a priest of deep learning and deeper compassion, he was orthodox and humane in equal measure. He loved being a parish priest and loved the people entrusted to his care. I recall a confirmation at St Luke's, Kingston, some years ago when Father David had been entrusted with the preparation of the candidates, nearly all young adults; his pride in presenting them was matched only by their gratitude for his teaching and his attentiveness. At All Saints, Benhilton, it was very much that – finally, after complexities in his ministerial life and no little personal sadness – Father David had 'come home' as an Incumbent. I know that the people of All Saints mourn his loss very deeply.

I enjoyed many conversations – cultural, theological, personal – with Father David, and was always enriched by his insight and his wisdom. Ever keen to get beyond small talk and address the deeper things of life and faith, Father David was a humble man whose influence on others was greater than he knew. He showed me great kindness. The See of Fulham and the Church of God have lost a fine priest. How apt, in our bereavement, to recall the words of the Lord – 'Well done, good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

*The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker,
Bishop of Fulham*

The funeral and requiem mass of Fr David Chislett SSC will take place on Thursday 7 March, in his parish of All Saints, Benhilton. The Bishop of Fulham will preside at the 11am Requiem Mass (SSC clergy are invited to robe and sit in choir); a private cremation attended by the family will follow.

May he rest in peace and rise with Christ in glory.

ND

Sealed by the Spirit

John Gayford writes on Confirmation as the Sacrament of Christian Commitment

Confirmation is the sacrament in which, through the laying on of hands, anointing with chrism and prayer, those already baptised are strengthened by the Holy Spirit in a fuller way that they may steadfastly profess the faith and faithfully live up to their profession. It is not necessary for salvation but recommended by the Church. The bishop is the ordinary minister of this sacrament as successor of the apostles demonstrating that those receiving this sacrament are united with the whole church. If a person baptised is in danger of death the sacrament may be administered by any priest.

Life is full of beginnings and endings, celebrated with a ceremony; like graduation from university, the ending of an apprenticeship, also being accepted as a part of a professional team. In some sports this can be marked by the awarding of a cap. In the Western Church there were local variations in the ritual of confirmation between 600 and 1200 including foot washing for those about to become disciples, taking the events of St. John 13 as a scriptural background.

Neither the Book of Common Prayer nor Common Worship makes provision for anointing at confirmation but it is widely practiced among Anglo-Catholics. Lutherans, Methodists, United Reform, and Baptists allow for a service where individuals make a profession of faith and there is laying on of hands before members receive their admittance to Holy Communion. Before this event there may be a period of study, catechism or confirmation classes. The age of confirmation varies a great deal, forming part a continuum of devotion and participation in involvement in church life. This may involve becoming a server, possibly going on retreats and the older aspirant further involvement in Church life such as becoming a eucharistic minister, member of the PCC or a Sunday-school teacher. There are less high profile tasks such as church cleaning and maintenance that in some way are necessary and visual evidence of commitment. To celebrate the occasion there may be a domestic party after the church service.

The Coptic Church follows the Orthodox pattern of combining baptism, chrismation and receiving first communion as an infant. The anointing with Myron can be very elaborate with special prayers and multiple anointing after which the child is robed in white. We can find biblical background of confirmation after the baptism of converts in Samaria, with Peter and John laying hands on them (Acts 8.14-17). Saul, after his conversion experience (before he became Paul the apostle), had hands laid on him by Ananias (Acts 9.17). In turn, St Paul at Ephesus laid hands on those who had been baptized but had not heard of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19.1-7). In both cases the recipients, had not been baptized 'In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. St Paul makes it clear that acceptance into the Christian faith is only complete with the seal

of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1.13; Hebrews 6.2), and instruction on the faith, baptism and the laying on of hands are important parts of admission to the Christian faith.

In the days when adult baptism was the usual practice for converts, the sealing of the covenant made in baptism was confirmed by the bishop with laying on of hands and anointing immediately after the baptism. The candidate for baptism was prepared with catechesis during Lent and baptized during the Easter Vigil liturgy and then clothed in white robes went to the bishop to confirm the promises made in baptism.

High infant mortality urged Christian parents to have children baptized as soon as possible. Parents and godparents made promises on behalf of the child being baptized. In the Eastern Orthodox churches (where sacraments are called *mysteries*) the chrismation follows immediately after baptism, when the child is anointed and receives the eucharistic sacrament for the first time from the priest. The first three *mysteries* are received at the same time and so babes in arms can go on receiving the eucharist. This is administered by a spoon, as it is to all communicants of the Eastern rites, where the bread and wine have been mixed before consecration. There is no separate rite of the sacrament of confirmation at a later date as in the Western Church. There is clearly a wide variation in the way this sacrament can be administered.

In the Western Church, various ritual practices were seen in the post-Apostolic era which included anointing with oil and laying on of hands associated with full membership as a member of the Church. Tertullian (c.155-c.220) in his *De Baptismo* saw laying on of hands as an important aspect of this post-baptismal ritual. In the Apostolic Tradition, there was both anointing and laying on of hands together which, in the fourth century, began to separate ritually. Thus baptism and confirmation became separated, but the bishop was seen as the ordinary minister even though he could not always be there in person.

The move to confirmation as a separate sacramental rite in the Western Church began in the 3rd century and did not spread through Europe until the 5th century. In the New Testament, apostles laid hands on converts and sometimes anointed them. It was not until the Middle Ages that the ritual of confirmation was defined and it became one of the seven sacraments, even though it took many conferences for this to become established. Baptism in the Early Church was confined to the Baptismal season of Easter (except in the case of emergencies). Direction was given by early councils that those baptized by priest and deacons must be brought to a bishop for confirmation and so it became a sacrament of the Church. With maturity, vows taken by sponsors (parents and godparents) could be taken on by the person themselves and facilitate their admission to the eucharistic community.

Pope Gregory the Great saw the bishop as the normal minister of confirmation, but that in emergency it could be a priest. This was the norm in England. The bishop gave the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit and this remained the norm until the Reformation. Confirmation brings the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit into focus. Isaiah 11.1-2, with the Spirit of the Lord, gives us six but St Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica* 2.2) adds piety to make seven and defines these as wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. Augustine of Hippo derives his list of gifts of the Holy Spirit from the Beatitudes of St. Matthew's Gospel (5.1-12).

The Council of Florence in 1439 declared Confirmation a new Pentecost. Reformers challenged confirmation being a sacrament (Zwingli called it a ceremony) but Luther said the laying on of hands gives dignity to the occasion and Calvin agreed. The Council of Trent left many questions about confirmation unanswered. The rite (not called a sacrament) of confirmation passed into the 1549 Book of Common Prayer with the laying on of hands becoming prominent, but without the use of chrism yet signed with the cross in the 1552 version, and into the 1662 version where the implied vows were explicitly expressed. The ritual interval between baptism and confirmation was variable; Henry VIII brought the Princess Elizabeth to confirmation when she was three days old. In the 18th century, Anglican bishops had been known to administer confirmation without dismounting from their horse.

Most agree that the custom of the bishop giving a ceremonial light slap of the face after laying on of hands and anointing has been abandoned since the liturgical reforms in 1971 after the Second Vatican Council. A few traditionalists claim this was never officially banned and was an ancient custom (first approved in the 13th century but also considered recent addition). Its purpose was to show that after confirmation there is a need to stand up to adversity.

Is the sacrament of confirmation searching for a theology? There is evidence of some struggle to give theological meaning to the sacrament. This was evident in trying to define the difference in the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism and confirmation. There was even argument as to whether the substantial gift of the Holy Spirit was in the laying on of hands or the anointing with chrism, or both. Argument was put forward that the gift of the Holy Spirit in confirmation was the armour for battle with forces of evil in daily life. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) provided the definitive definition for the Middle Ages in his *Summa Theologiae* as he discussed the concept of spiritual strength and maturity: baptism relates to birth, confirmation pertains to growth, and the eucharist to spiritual nourishment. In his day the bishop would say: *I sign you with the sign of the cross and confirm you with the chrism of salvation in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* Thus making the signing with chrism the sacred action of the sacrament.

In the Western Church, confirmation is necessary before ordination and even suggested before marriage, but



The Bishop of Fulham confirming at St James's, Sussex Gardens, in January

the latter was not mandatory. The question of age has often been raised with various ages being suggested. No longer do we speak of a specific age but it is seen a sacrament of maturity. The Council of Trent said 'age of reason' without defining it, unless there is an emergency when the sacrament can be administered at any age by any priest.

Confirmation completes the baptismal grace and more perfectly binds individuals to the Church with the special gift of the Holy Spirit, to become true witnesses of Christ in character; this needs careful preparation. In the Western Church, especially for Anglicans, the bishop is the ordinary minister of the sacrament of confirmation. In the Roman Catholic Church, this ministry may be given to a parish priest by faculty. In an urgent pastoral situation, such as when a person is seriously ill, any priest may have to assume this role, with the bishop being symbolically present through his consecration of the chrism. An important element is being able to develop a dialogue to establish basic beliefs which may euphemistically be called 'brief catechism'. This could result in anointing of the sick, baptism, confirmation and first communion together. Confession could be included as a fifth sacrament in this session, and in this exceptional circumstance it is all bound in with preparation for a holy death.

Confirmation should transform a way of life: to take on commitments within the life of the Church which are best nominated but may be changed as the person matures. Basically, to believe, to serve the community, to pour forth the spirit of love and even to preach to others, preferably in deeds, seen to be more powerful than preaching in words. Confirmation is arguably the Cinderella of the sacraments in the shadow of baptism and the eucharist. **ND**

Suggested Further Reading

- Martimort, A. G. *Christian Initiation in the Church at Prayer (Volume III Sacraments)* Translated by O'Connell M.J. The Liturgical Press Collegeville Minnesota. 1988
- Martos, J. *Confirmation in Doors to the Sacred.* Liguori Publications Missouri 2014.
- Quinn, F.C. *The Theology of Confirmation* in the New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship, edited by Fink, P.E. A Michael Glazier Book. The Liturgical Press Collegeville Minnesota. 1990.

Church Crawling

Simon Cotton is inspired by the tower of Saint Mary, North Petherton

The small Somerset town of North Petherton must have been a proud place around 1520. They'd just built the finest church tower in Somerset, to be copied by the village of Probus in Cornwall as the model for theirs c.1523. Built in slate blue lias with golden Ham Hill stone dressings and 111 ½ feet to the top of its pinnacles, this exquisitely proportioned tower has a beautiful belfry stage, complete with 'katerynke', the diagonal Somerset tracery in pierced stone in its windows. Taller than the earlier classic Somerset towers like Ile Abbots (ND Feb 2018) and Kingston St Mary, its clever designer attenuated the stair turret so that it does not obtrude, emphasising its verticality. Eight pinnacled buttresses surround the latticed cage of the belfry stage. The design is



based on the slightly earlier tower of Taunton's St Mary Magdalene, built from c.1488. The present battlements date from 1704, completing the design admirably.

Within 30 years the Reformation had arrived and the church was stripped, though the 15th c. pulpit survived. It took until 1909 to replace the roodscreen with accompanying figures of the crucified Christ, with Mary and John.



When the Laudian vicar, John Morley, came back in 1660, he must have had mixed feelings. Vicar since 1615, he had been ejected by the Parliamentarians in 1646; during the intervening years his wife Katherine had died, in December 1652. Before he died on February 27, 1661, he created her memorial: the brass plaque in the central aisle showing her kneeling at a prie-dieu with the text 'Christ is my life'. **ND**

Map reference: ST290330

parish directory

BATH Bathwick Parishes, St Mary's (bottom of Bathwick Hill), **St John's** (opposite the fire station) Sunday - 9.00am Sung Mass at St John's, 10.30am at St Mary's 6.00pm Evening Service - 1st, 3rd & 5th Sunday at St Mary's and 2nd & 4th at St John's. Contact Fr. Peter Edwards 01225 460052 or www.bathwick-parishes.org.uk

BEXHILL on SEA St Augustine's, Cooden Drive, TN39 3AZ Saturday: Mass at 6pm (first Mass of Sunday) Sunday: Mass at 8am, Parish Mass with Junior Church at 10am. Further details of services and events at St. Augustine's please visit our website: www.staugustinesbexhill.org.uk

BIRMINGHAM St Agatha, Stratford Road, Sparkbrook (B11 1QT) "If it is worth believing in, it is worth travelling for" Sunday Mass 11am. Contact 0121 449 2790 www.saintagathas.org.uk

BISHOP AUCKLAND St Helen Auckland, Manor Road, West Auckland Medieval church. A Parish of the Society of S. Wilfrid and S. Hilda. Sunday: Sung Mass 10am, Evensong and Benediction (First Sunday of the Month) 6pm. Weekday Mass: Mon 7pm, Tues, Fri, Sat 9.30am, Wed 10am, Rosary Mon 6.30pm. Messy Church every third Saturday 11.30am, Parish Priest: Canon Robert McLeer SSC 01388 604152. www.sthelenchurch.co.uk Curate Fr Edward Gunn 07485 756177 st.helen.curate@gmail.com Youth and Community Worker 07485545278 communitysha@yahoo.com

BLACKPOOL St Stephen on the Cliffs, Holmfield Road, FY2 9RG. A SWSH Registered Parish. Sundays - 9am Said Mass, 10.30am Solemn Mass, 6pm Evening Service. Easy Access & Loop. Tel 01 253 351484 www.ststephenblackpool.co.uk

BOSTON LINCOLNSHIRE St Nicholas, Skirbeck Boston's oldest Parish Church. A Society and Forward in Faith Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richmond. Sunday Sung Mass 9.30am. Midweek services as displayed on notice boards. Parish in vacancy, enquiries to website. www.skirbeckstnicholas.com

BOURNEMOUTH St Ambrose, West Cliff Road, BH4 8BE. A Parish under the patronage of Ss. Wilfrid & Hilda. Sunday: 8am Low Mass BCP, 10am Sung Mass Traditional Ceremonial (CW), 4pm Solemn Evensong, 2nd Sunday of the month Solemn Evensong with Benediction. Daily Mass, Monday to Saturday, at 8.45am and Daily Evening Prayer, Monday to Saturday, at 5.30pm and the Rosary on Wednesdays at 5.00pm before Evening Prayer. Parish Priest Fr Adrian Pearce SSC 01202 911569; Parish office 01202 766772. Email: afpear2@gmail.com

BOURNEMOUTH St Katharine, Church Road, Southbourne, BH6 4AS. A Parish under the Episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Richmond. Sung Mass at 10.30am on Sunday. Contact: Dean Quinton, Churchwarden 01425 672601 deanquinton@hotmail.com

BOWBURN, Durham Christ the King, DH6 5DS; A parish of the Society, under the care of the Bishop of Beverley. Durham City's 'Forward in Faith' parish. Sunday: 11am Sung Mass and Sunday School; Weekday Mass: Wed 10am, Fri 6.30pm; Parish Priest: Fr John Livesley SSC 01388 814817

BRADFORD St Chad, Toller Lane, BD8 9DE (B6144, 1 mile from city centre). Society Parish. Sunday: Solemn Mass 10.45 am, Evening Prayer 6.30 pm. Wednesday: Mass 7.30 pm. For other information please refer to the website: <https://schads.church>. The parish is currently in vacancy.

BRIGHTON & HOVE WAGNER GROUP St Barnabas' (11am) Fr. John Eldridge 01273 881761 www.stbarnabas.co.uk **St Bartholomew's** (10.30am) Fr. Ben Eadon 01273 325301. www.stbartholomewsbrighton.org.uk **St Martin's** (10.30am) Fr Trevor Buxton 01273 604687 www.stmartinsbrighton.co.uk. **St Michael's** (10.30am) 01 273 822284 www.saintmichaels-brighton.wordpress.com. **St Paul's** (11am) Fr Ben Eadon 01273 325301 www.saintpaulschurch.org.uk. (Sunday Principal Mass times in brackets.)

BRISTOL Oswestry parishes All Hallows, Easton BS5 0HH. **Holy Nativity**, Knowle BS4 2AG. Sunday Mass 10:00 a.m. (both Churches), Weekday masses: Tuesday 7.15 p.m & Wednesday 10:00 a.m. (All Hallows). Contacts: Fr Jones Mutemwakwenda 01179551804, www.allhallowseaston.org Philip Goodfellow, Churchwarden. 07733 111 800 phil@holynativity.org.uk www.holynativity.org.uk

BROMLEY St George's Church, Bickley Sunday 8.00am Low Mass, 10.30am Sung Mass. Low Mass 9.30 Tuesday-Saturday (Saturday with Rosary). Parish Priest Fr Henry Everett 0208 295 6411. Parish website: www.stgeorgebickley.co.uk and find us on Facebook.

BURGH-LE-MARSH SS. Peter and Paul, Sunday Sung Mass with Sermon at 9.30am, Sunday Choral Evensong with Sermon at 6pm, We welcome all visitors, including those with well-behaved dogs. We are part of a group 10 churches offering a daily Mass and a full sacramental ministry. Call Fr Aiden for details 01754 450815 www.achurchnearyou.com/benefice/21-075BT/ www.burghchurch.co.uk

CARDIFF near rail, bus, Principality Stadium, city centre and Bay Daily Mass **St Mary**, Bute Street Sunday: Solemn Mass 11am; Parish Priest Fr. Dean Atkins SSC 029 2048 7777 or 07368176300 www.stmaryscf10.co.com

CHARD The Good Shepherd, Furnham. Under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry. Sunday: Sung Mass 9.45am, Miss Alison Cruickshank 01460 68779 www.churchofthegoodshepherd-chard.weebly.com

CHESTERFIELD S. Paul, Hasland, Derbyshire, S41 0JX Sunday: Sung Parish Mass 10.30am, Low Mass: Wednesday 10.30am, Benediction: Last Tuesday 7:15 pm, Cell Mass: 2nd Friday 7:15 pm.

S. James the Apostle, Temple Normanton, Derbyshire, S42 5DB Sunday: Parish Mass 9am, Thursday: Low Mass 7.15pm, except Benediction: 2nd Thursday 7:15 pm. Contact: Fr. Geoffrey Borrowdale SSC 01246 232486 frgeoffrey@stpaulshasland.com www.stpaulshasland.com

CHOPWELL Saint John the Evangelist NE17 7AN A Society Parish. Sunday - Sung Mass 10am. Daily Office & Mass as displayed. Parish Priest: Rev Tom Brazier: 07799 217775 greenidevicar@solo.net

COVENTRY St. Oswald Tile Hill Monday & Thursday - 9am BCP Morning Prayer, Tuesday, Friday & Saturday - 9am Morning Prayer [CW], Tuesday - 1pm Rosary Prayers, Wednesday - 9.30am Mass, Sunday - 10am Mass, [First Sunday] 6pm Evensong & Benediction. Fr Edward Backhouse SSC - 07485 493418. Church Office - 07512 924401. Find us on Facebook www.stoswalds.co.uk

DERBY St Anne's. Sunday Sung Mass 1115. For directions and details of weekday Masses (usually 1200 on Wednesdays) and Choral Evensongs with Benediction (usually the Third Sunday of the month) - see A Church Near You website. Fr Giles Orton SSC 07768 827101

DEVIZES St. Peter's, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire. Society of St. Wilfrid and St. Hilda parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry. Sundays 10am Sung Mass. Wednesdays 10.30am Low Mass. On major festivals & Saints' Days - times vary. Contact: Duty volunteer Tel: 07852696281 stpetersdevizes@outlook.com www.achurchnearyou.com/9679

DEWSBURY St Saviour's, Ravensthorpe. A parish under the care of the Bishop of Wakefield. Sundays 10 am Sung Mass. For further details - 'A Church Near You' WF13 3JR, and follow us on Facebook 'Savvylove'. Fr George Spencer 07388507282

DONCASTER St Wilfrid's, Cantley DN4 6QR A beautiful and historically significant church with much Comper restoration. A Society Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. Modern catholic worship with a friendly atmosphere. Sunday: 8am Mass and 10.45am Parish Mass. Wednesday: 9.30am Mass (followed by coffee morning). Friday: 8pm Mass. Saturday 9.30am Mass. Visitors very welcome. Contact: Fr. Andrew Howard SSC. (01302) 285316, mob. 0774 0932758 fatherahoward@gmail.com

EASTBOURNE St Saviour's A Society Parish. Sunday: Said Mass 9.00am Solemn Mass 10.30am. Daily Mass & Office. For details and information contact Fr. Mark McAulay SSC, 01323 722317 www.stsaviourseastbourne.org.uk

FOLKESTONE Kent, St Peter on the East Cliff A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richmond. Solemn Mass: Sunday at 10.30 am. Weekday Mass: Thursday at 12 noon, preceded by coffee/tea at 11 am; High Mass for Holy Days - usually 7.30 pm (check website newsletter). Contact: The Churchwarden 07947 064863 <http://stpetersfolkestone.co.uk> e-mail: warden.john@stpetersfolkestone.co.uk

GRIMSBY St Augustine, Legsby Avenue Lovely Grade II Church by Sir Charles Nicholson. A Forward in Faith Parish under Bishop of Richmond. Sundays: Parish Mass 10am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction 6pm (Third Sunday). Contact telephone number 07941894822

HALIFAX St Paul, King Cross: Queens Road, HX1 3NU. An inclusive resolution parish receiving sacramental provision from the Bishop of Wakefield. Sunday: 11.00 Solemn Mass; Occasional Choral Evensong. www.stpaulskingcross.co.uk

HARTLEPOOL St Oswald's, Brougham Terrace. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. Sunday: Sung Mass 10am. Daily Mass, Offices and Confessions as displayed. Parish Priest: Fr. Richard Massheadar, 01429 272934

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD St Francis of Assisi, Hammerfield, Glenview Road, HP1 1TD. Under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richmond. Sunday Sung Mass at 10am. Solemn Evensong and Benediction at 6.30pm as announced. Traditional rite and ceremonial sung to Merbecke. Vicar: Fr. Michael Macey, 01442 243258 e-mail: vicar@stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk

KINGSTON-upon-THAMES St Luke's, Gibbon Road (short walk from Kingston railway station) Sunday services: 8am Low Mass (English Missal), 10.30am Sung Mass (Western Rite), 5pm Evensong. Weekday services Tuesday to Friday 9am Mass. For further information phone the Parish Office 0759 2408419. Web page: www.stlukekingston.uk

LINCOLN All Saints, Monks Road. LN2 5JN. Society & F in F Parish under the care of the Bishop of Richmond. Sundays-Sung Mass 9.30am. Evening Prayer 6pm. (2nd & 4th Evensong & Benediction) Weekdays- Monday, Wednesday, Saturday 8.30am; Thursday 7pm (Eucharistic Adoration from 6.15pm); Friday 10am. Vicar: Fr Paul Noble SSC- 01522 524319 www.allsaints-monksroad.com Facebook- All Saints Church, Monks Road

LOFTUS-IN-CLEVELAND St Leonard, Loftus & St Helen, Carlin How, situated on the North Yorkshire Coast. Sunday - Said Mass at Carlin How 9am and Family Mass at Loftus 10.30am. Parish Priest Fr. Adam Gaunt 01287 644047. Email: AdamGaunt@btinternet.com Further details on our website: www.loftusparish.co.uk or on Facebook: www.facebook.com/loftusparish

LONDON EC3 St Magnus the Martyr, Lower Thames Street (nearest Tube: Monument or Bank) A Society Parish Under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Fulham. Mass: Sunday 11am, refreshments following, Tues, Wed, Thur and Fri 12.30. [Midweek mass subject to change] Visitors very welcome. Website: www.stmtm.org.uk rector@stmtm.org.uk

LONDON E1W St Peter's, London Docks, Wapping Lane. Nearest station is Wapping (Overground). Buses: D3 or 100. A registered parish of the Society of S. Wilfrid & S. Hilda. Sunday Masses: 9.15am and 10.30am. Contact: Fr Jonathan Beswick SSC 0207 481 2985. For daily mass and office times please see website. www.stpeterslondon docks.org.uk

LONDON N21 Holy Trinity, Winchmore Hill, Green Lanes, N21 3RS. A modern catholic parish under the Bishop of Fulham. Every Sunday: Parish Mass 10.30am with Junior Church. Weekdays: Wednesday 11.00am Rosary or Exposition and Simple Benediction followed by 12.00 noon Angelus and Mass. Friday 12 noon Angelus and Mass. For the Sacrament of Reconciliation and other enquires contact holytrinityn21a@gmail.com or phone 020 8364 2724

Continued on next page

LONDON NW3 All Hallows Gospel Oak, Hampstead, NW3 2LD A Society Parish under the Bishop of Fulham. Parish Mass each Sunday at 10am. For further details: Prebendary David Houlding SSC

LONDON NW9 St Andrew's, Kingsbury (Wembley Park tube station then 83 bus (direction Golders Green) to Tudor Gardens.) A Society Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham. Sunday: Sung Mass 10.30am, Thursday: Mass 10.00am – both followed by refreshments. Contact: Fr Jason Rendell on 020 8205 7447 or standrews.kingsbury@london.anglican.org - www.standrewskingsbury.org.uk

LONDON SE11 4BB St Agnes Kennington Park, St Agnes Place. Under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham. 8 minutes walk from both Kennington and the Oval tube stations (Northern line) Sunday: 10am Solemn Mass. Daily Mass: Mon, Tue, Thur & Fri 10am. stagneskenningtonpark.co.uk 020 7820 8050 frpaulensor@btconnect.com

LONDON SE13 St Stephen, Lewisham (opposite Lewisham Station) A Forward in Faith Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham. Sunday: Parish Mass 10am. Weekdays: Mon 10am, Tue/Wed/Thur/Fri 12.15pm, Sat 10am. Parish Priest: Fr Michael Bailey - 07713 258429 www.sswsml.com

LONDON SE18 St Nicholas - the Ancient Parish Church - St Nicholas Road, Plumstead. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham. Masses: Solemn Sung 11am; Mon 12 noon; Tu es 12 noon; Wed 9.30am; Fri 12 noon; Sat 10am. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament half an hour before every Mass apart from Sunday. Modern rite, traditional ceremonial. Parish Priest: Fr Andrew Stevens 020 8854 0461

LONDON SW1 St Gabriel, Pimlico Sunday: Mass 8am; Sung Parish Mass 10.30am. Choral Evensong (termtime) 6pm. Wednesday: School mass (termtime) 9.15am; Choral Evensong (termtime) 5.30pm. Midweek Mass: Tues 9.30am, Wed 6.30pm, Thurs 9.30am, Fri 10am, Sat 9.30am. www.stgabrielspimlico.com

LONDON SW7 St Stephen, Gloucester Road (entrance in Southwell Gardens) A Fulham Jurisdiction Parish. Modern rite, traditional ceremonial, gospel preaching and good music. Sunday: Masses 9am and 11am (Solemn). Daily Mass: Tues 12.30pm, Wed 7pm, Thur 12.30pm, Fri 6pm, Sat 9.30am. Holy Hour: every Friday 5pm. Fr Philip Barnes SSC Contact: 020 7370 3418. Email: saint.stephen@homecall.co.uk www.saint-stephen.org.uk

LONDON SW11 The Ascension, Lavender Hill. Famous and flourishing Resolution and Society Parish, in the care of the Bishop of Fulham. Sunday: Solemn Mass at 11am. Weekday Masses: Tuesday at 10am; Wednesday at 19.30; Saturday at 11.30. Rosary: Saturday 11am. Active SOLW Cell which organises pilgrimage, social & fundraising activities. Parish Priest: Fr Philip Kennedy CMP. Contact: 020 7228 5340 ascensionsw11@gmail.com

LONDON SW19 All Saints, South Wimbledon. Society Parish Under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Fulham. Sunday Solemn Mass 11am. For other masses and services contact Fr Christopher Noke 020 8940 6106, the church office 020 8542 5514 or see <https://allsaintschurchsouthwimbledon.com/>

LONDON WC1 Christ the King, Gordon Square The Forward in Faith Church. Mon to Fri: Mass at 12.30pm, plus: Thur at 12 noon: Angelus followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament until 12.25pm. Other services: as announced. Contact the FIF Office on 020 7388 3588 or email: chaplain@forwardinfaith.com

LOWESTOFT St John the Baptist, Lound. Society Parish under the Episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Richborough.. A warm welcome awaits you at our listed medieval building with a superb interior by Sir Ninian Campbell. Sung Mass regularly each month. Please contact Rev Leslie Hobbs 01502 732536 or Kevin Turner 07828661970 for further details. info@loundchurch.uk www.loundchurch.uk

MANCHESTER M27 The Parish of Swinton and Pendlebury: All Saints, Wardley; **Saint Augustine**, Pendlebury; **Saint Peter**, Swinton. A Society Parish. Sunday Masses: 8am and 5.30pm (SP), Sung at 9.30am (AS), 10.30am (SP) and 11am (SA). Daily Mass in Parish. Priest Jeremy Sheehy 0161 794 1578, Parish Office: 0161 727 8175 email: paroffsandp@bt-connect.com

MIDDLESBROUGH The Church of St Columba Sunday: Mass 9.30am. **St John the Evangelist** Sunday Mass 11am. For further information contact Fr Paul Kronbergs SSC 01642 824779

NORTH YORK MOORS S. Leonard, Loftus and **S. Helen**, Carlin How. Situated on the Cleveland Coast. Sunday - Mass at Carlin How 9am and at Loftus 10.30am. Further details on our website www.loftusparish.co.uk or on Facebook www.facebook.com/loftusparish Parish Priest Fr. Adam Gaunt 01287 644047 AdamGaunt@btinternet.com

OXFORD St Laurence, South Hinksey (OX1 5AQ) with **St John the Evangelist**, (OX1 4RE) Comper's Hidden Gem - A Society Parish under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Oswestry. St John's: Sundays 10.45 High Mass, Wednesdays 7pm Low Mass. St Laurence: every other Sunday 9.15am. Free Parking outside Churches and warm welcome. Contact: Fr Thomas Fink-Jensen, 01865807875 or www.hinkseychurch.org "The Oxford Movement continued today."

PORTSMOUTH The Ascension and St Saviour, Society Parishes under the Bishop of Richborough. **The Ascension P02 0JG**, Parish Mass 11am. Low Mass: Thursday 7pm. **St Saviour P02 8PB**, Parish Mass 9.30am. Low Mass: Monday 10am, Wednesday 11.30am, Friday 7pm. Solemn Evensong and Benediction (last Sunday) 6pm. Modern rite, traditional ceremonial. Fr Benjamin Weitzmann SSC 02392439711 www.ascensionportsmouth.org.uk

PRESTON St George's, (PR1 2NP) - 'Preston's Hidden Gem'. Affiliated to The Society. Sunday - 10.30am Parish Mass. For Daily Masses see website. Parish Priest: Fr David Craven SSC (01772 755125 or dacraven@hotmail.com) www.sgp.org.uk or www.facebook/stgeorgethemartyrpreston

READING St Giles-in-Reading, Southampton Street (next to the Orade). Medieval church. Forward in Faith, affiliated with The Society. Sunday: Parish Mass 10.30am; Low Mass 6pm. Daily Offices (Mattins, Evensong) and Daily Mass (except Mondays, check website for times). Compline daily online at 9pm. Regular study groups, see our website. Parish Priest Fr David Harris 0118 957 2831. sgiles.vicar@gmail www.sgilesreading.org.uk

REDDITCH St Peter's Church, Crabbs Cross, Littlewoods, Redditch, B97 5LB - Services: Sunday Sung Mass 10.30am, Thursday Said Mass 10.30am. Friday Stations of the Cross 10.30am. Parish Priest Fr G Reading. Contact: Diane Mowatt 01527 542222

ST. LEONARD'S-on-SEA Christ Church with St Mary Magdalen and St Peter and St Paul. Daily Mass 10.30am and 6pm. Sunday Mass 8am, 9.30am, 10.30am. Contact: Parish Office 01 424 447784 www.christchurchstleonards.co.uk

SALISBURY St Martin - the oldest Church in Salisbury. We can be found in St. Martin's Church Street just over the inner city ring road. Walk up St. Ann Street from the Close and through the tunnel. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry. Parish Mass at 10.30am. For further information about the Daily Office, weekday mass and confession see www.sarumstmartin.org.uk or call 01722503123. Parish Priest: Fr. David Fisher. 01722 320033

SCARBOROUGH St Saviour with All Saints, Parish affiliated to the Society of St Wilfrid and Hilda and under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Beverley. Sunday Mass 11am with refreshments to follow. Evening Prayer and Benediction as announced. Weekday masses: Thursday 10am. Major Festivals times vary. Fr David Dixon 01723 363828 frdavidstmart@gmail.com stsaviour-scarborough.org.uk

SEAHAM: COUNTY DURHAM Parish of The Society in the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Beverley. **S John**, Seaham Harbour SR7 7SA (with All Saints Deneside & S Mary's Seaham) Sunday 11.00am Solemn Mass & Sunday School. 9.30am Sung Mass **All Saints** (9am 1st Sun) 10am Sung Mass **S Mary's** (1st Sun). 5pm Solemn Evensong & Benediction **S. John's** (2nd Sun). Mass Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat, 9.30am & Tues 6pm & Thurs 12pm noon **S John's**, Sat 10.30am **S Mary's**. Confessions by arrangements with Priests. Clergy: Fr Paul Kennedy SSC 0191 3665496, Fr Chris Collins 0191 5817186.

SHREWSBURY All Saints with St Michael, North Street SY1 2JH (near Shrewsbury railway station). A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry. Sunday Parish Mass 10.30am. Daily Mass and times of confessions: contact the Parish

Priest, Fr Simon Sayer CMP: T: 01743 357862. allsaintscastlefields.vicar@gmail.com

SNEINTON, NOTTINGHAM St Stephen's with St Matthias. Services Thursday and Sunday at 9.30am. Contemporary Worship Wednesday at 7pm. Rev John Blakeley Priest in Charge. Mobile 07368 697 292 Email john@ststephens.info

SOUTH SHIELDS, St Michael and All Angels, South Westoe, NE33 3PD. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. Sunday: Mass (BCP) 8am and Sung Mass 11am. Evensong and Benediction, first Sunday of the month, 5pm. Weekday Masses: Monday 9am, Tuesday 6pm and Thursday 11am (BCP). Contact Fr Mark Mawhinney SSC: 0191-454-8060 fathermarkmawhinney@gmail.com

SPENNYMOOR, CO. DURHAM St Andrew, Tudhoe Grange, DL16 6NE A parish of the Society, under the care of the Bishop of Beverley; Sundays: 9am Sung Mass, Last Sunday of the month - 10.15am-11.30am "Messy Church" in the hall for children and families, 6pm Evensong (with Benediction on 1st Sunday of month); Weekday Masses: Tues 7pm, Thurs 10am. Parish Priest: Fr John Livesley SSC - 01388 814817

STOKE-ON-TRENT, LONGTON SS Mary and Chad. A Society Parish under the extended episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry. This parish is currently in interregnum. Sunday Parish Mass 10am; For all weekday services or enquiries please contact 01782 873662

SUNDERLAND St Aidan, Ryhope Road, Sunderland, SR2 9RS. A Parish of the Society under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. Weekday Masses: Monday 9.30am, Tuesday 12.30pm, Wednesday 9.30am, Thursday 7pm and Saturday 9.30am. Holy Rosary Monday 6pm. Confessions Sat 6.15 pm or by appointment. Parish Office; Thursdays 6.00-6.30pm. Contact: Vicar Fr David Raine SSC: 0191 5143485, farvad@sky.com

SUNDERLAND St Mary Magdalene, Wilson Street, Millfield. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. Sunday: Parish Mass 10.30am, Benediction 6.30pm, Mass 7pm. Weekdays Mass 10.30am Mon and Wed, 7.30pm Thurs, 7.30am Fri, 10.00am Sat. Rosary 7.15pm Thurs, 6.15pm Sat. Confessions 6.30pm Sat, or by appointment. Parish Priest: Beresford Skelton CMP SSC 0191 565 6318 www.st-marymagdalene.co.uk Visit our Facebook page

SUTTON All Saints, Benhilton A Parish of the Society in the care of the Bishop of Fulham. Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Solemn Mass 9.30am. Weekdays Low Mass: Monday and Tues 7.30am, Wed 7.30pm, Thurs 10am, Fri 7.30am, Sat 10am. For further information please contact Fr David Chislett SSC: 07860 636 270. Churchwardens: Linda Roots 020 8644 7271, Carolyn Melius 020 8642 4276

SWINDON Parish of Swindon New Town A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry. Sunday masses: 9.00am S. Saviour's; 10.30am S. Mark's; 11am S. Luke's. For Daily Mass see <https://swindonnewtown.co.uk>. Contact 01793 538220 swindonnewtown@btinternet.com

TAUNTON Holy Trinity, Trinity St, Taunton, TA1 3JG. Society Parish. Modern Catholic liturgy. Musical tradition. Sunday Services 8.10 & 6.30. Daily Mass. Fr Julian Laurence SSC, Vicar. See website for full details of services and events holytrinity-taunton.org

TIPTON, West Midlands St John the Evangelist, Upper Church Lane, DY4 9ND. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry. Sunday Parish Mass 9.30am. During the vacancy, please check times on 'A Church Near You' or contact Churchwardens: Annmarie Hinde 07940 991306 or Glenis Darby 07958 371611

TIVIDALE, Oldbury, West Midlands St. Michael, Tividale Road B69 2LQ and **Holy Cross**, Ashleigh Road B69 1LL. A Society Parish. Sunday: Parish Mass 11am (St Michael's), Sunday School 2 pm (Holy Cross). Contact: Currently Vacant frmnennis@gmail.com, www.vicaroftividale.co.uk

Continued on next page

N. YORKSHIRE near Skipton. Three rural churches. Sundays: **THORNTON St Mary** Sung Eucharist 9.15am. **MARTON St Peter** Prayer Book Holy Communion 10.45am. **BROUGHTON All Saints** Sung Holy Communion at 3 pm. (Winter time) 5pm (BST) Rector Fr. Robert Findlow. As services may vary, please check with Fr Robert on 01282-788621 robert.findlow@leeds.anglican.org www.bmtparish.co.uk

WALSALL St Gabriel's, Fullbrook, Walestead Road, Walsall, off **Junc7** or **9 of M6**. A Society Parish. Sunday: 8am Mass, 10am Parish Mass, 5pm Evening Mass. Daily Mass. Parish Priest: Fr Mark McIntyre 01922 622583

WEDNESBURY, West Bromwich St Francis of Assisi, Friar Park WS10 0HJ (5 minutes from Junc 9 of M6) Sunday Morning Mass at 10.00am. Weekday Mass: Tues and Thur 9.30am, Wed and Fri 7.30pm, Sat 10am. Lively worship in the Modern Catholic Tradition, with accessible preaching, and a stunning gem of a church beautifully restored. Parish Priest: Fr Ron Farrell SSC: 0121 556 5823 Visit us at www.saintfrancisfriarpark.com

WELLINGBOROUGH St Mary the Virgin, Knox Road (near BR station) A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the

Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: Mass 10.30am. Daily Mass and Office. For further information see our Website: www.stmarywellingborough.org.uk

WEST KIRBY S. Andrew, Graham Road, Wirral, CH48 5DQ. Parish of the Society under the pastoral care of the Bishop of Beverley. Sunday 10.30 AM Sung Mass. Evensong 6pm Third Sunday. Tuesday 10am Low Mass. Traditional Church of England Parish in the Diocese of Chester, visitors always warmly welcomed. <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/12709/> <https://www.facebook.com/saintandrewwestkirby/>

WESTON SUPER MARE All Saints with St Saviour, All Saints Road, BS23 2NL. We are an Affinity Parish with St John the Evangelist, Clevedon. A Member of the Society under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry. All are welcome. Sundays 10.30am Parish Mass, Weekdays 10.00am Mass (Wed, Thu & Sat) Priest-in-Charge: Fr Brendan Clover Tel: 0796 8505643 e-mail: parishpriest@stjohns-clevedon.org.uk - Parish Office 01934 415379 allsaintsandstaviour@btconnect.com Visit our website www.allsaintswsm.org

WEYMOUTH St Paul, Abbotsbury Road DT4 0BJ Under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry. Sundays: Morning

Prayer 9.45am, Sung Mass 10.30am (creche and Sunday school from 10.00am), Evensong and Benediction 5pm (BST) or 4pm (GMT). For daily service times see www.stpaulsweymouth.org or ring Vicar: Fr Gregory Lipovsky on 07796 963703 or stpweymouth@gmail.com

WINCHESTER Holy Trinity. A Society Church under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: Sung Mass 10.30am. Weekday Said Mass: Thur 12 noon. Contact: Churchwarden: John Purver 01 962 732351 - email: office@holymtrinitywinchesster.co.uk

YORK All Saints, North Street (near Park Inn Hotel) A Society Parish. Sunday: Low Mass 10.30 am [1st Sunday], Sung or High Mass 5.30pm, Thursday Low Mass 12.45 pm. Feast Days are observed on the Day. Visitors to this beautiful medieval church are always welcome; the church is normally open during daylight hours. - website: www.allsaints-northstreet.org.uk

WALSINGHAM St Mary & All Saints, Church Street. A Society and Forward in Faith Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: Solemn Mass, 11.00 am Weekdays: please see www.walsinghamparishes.org.uk Contact: Fr Harri Williams SSC, 01328 821316

Diocesan Directory

FIF, DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM Society Parishes Kingstanding St Luke 0121 354 3281, Kingstanding St Mark 0121 360 7288, Small Heath All Saints 0121 772 0621, Sparkbrook St Agatha 0121 449 2790, Washwood Heath St Mark & Saltley St Saviour* 0121 328 9855

FIF, DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY Society parishes Deal St Andrew 01843 527 576, Folkestone St Peter 07947 064863 (Warden), Harbledown St Michael 01227 479377, Maidstone St Michael 01622 679551, Ramsgate Holy Trinity 01843 527576, Rough Common St Gabriel 01227 479377

FIF, DIOCESE OF CHESTER Chester St Oswald and St Thomas of Canterbury, Fr Stephen Sheridan 01 244 399990; Congleton St James the Great, Society, Fr Colin Sanderson 01260 408203; Crewe St Barnabas, Society, Fr Ralph Powell 01270 212418; Crewe St Michael, Coppenthorpe, Society, Fr John Leal SSC 01270 215151; Knutsford St John the Baptist, Society, Rev Nigel Atkinson 01565 632834/755160; Liscard St Thomas the Apostle, Society, Fr Brian Bell 01516332185, Fr Robert Nelson 0151 630 2830, Stockport St Peter, Society, Fr Kenneth Kenrick 0161 4830675; West Kirby St Andrew, Society, Fr Brian Bell 01516332185

FIF, DIOCESE OF COVENTRY Coventry Centre: St John the Baptist (Fr Dexter Bracey 024 7671 1687); Holbrooks: St Luke (Fr Simon Oakes 024 7668 8604); Radford: St Nicholas (024 7659 9152); Nuneaton: St Mary the Virgin (Fr Roger Butcher 024 7638 2936).

FIF, DIOCESE OF DERBY Calow: St Peter, Interregnum, contact: Sheila Cotton, 01246 202538; Derby: St Anne, Parish Priest Fr Giles Orton SSC 01168 827101 frgilesorton@fastmail.fm; St Bartholomew and St Luke, Interregnum, Contact Frances Prockter 07762 566304 frances.prockter@gmail.com; Hasland St Paul and Temple Normanton St James: Fr Geoffrey Borrowdale 01246 232 486 frgeoffrey@stpaulshasland.com; Ilkeston Holy Trinity, Contact Geoffrey Raby 07905 323116 geoffreyraby@aol.com; Long Eaton St Laurence, Interregnum, 07469529261 stlaurence.longeaton@gmail.com; Staveley St John Baptist with Inkersall St Columba and Barrow Hill St Andrew: Team Vicar Fr Adrian Arnold, 07933 546370 fraparnold@gmail.com

DIOCESE OF EXETER FIF Recommended Parishes: Babba-combe All Saints, Fr P Jones 01803 323002; Barnstaple St Peter, Vacancy - Churchwarden - 07980 043305; Bovey Tracey St John, Vacancy - Churchwarden - 07733 228873; Exeter St Michael & All Angels, Heavitree; St Lawrence, Lower Hill Barton Rd; St Paul, Burnthouse Lane; St Mary Steps, West Street, Fr B. Rabjohns 01392 677150; Great Torrington St Michael, Taddipore St Mary Magdalene, Fr S. Turner - 01805 621392; Newton Abbot St Luke, Milber, Vacancy - Churchwarden - 07487 653854; Paignton St

John the Baptist with St Andrew & St Boniface Fr N Knox - 01 803 551866; Plymouth St Peter and the Holy Apostles Fr D Way - 01 752 240119; Plymouth Mission Community of Our Lady of Glastonbury St Francis, Honicknowle; St Chad, Whiteleigh, St Aidan, Emesettle, Fr D Bailey 01752 773874; Plymouth Discovery Mission Community, St Bartholomew, Devonport & St Mark, Ford Fr R. Silk - 01752 562623; Plymouth St Gabriel, Peverell Park Fr D. Bailey - 01752 773874; Torquay St Marychurch with St Martin, Fr N. Debney - 01803 914771; Torquay St John with Torre All Saints, Fr P March 01 803 312754

DIOCESE OF GUILDFORD Society Parishes Aldershot St Augustine, Fr William Perry - 01276 609498, Hawley Holy Trinity and All Saints, Fr William Perry - 01276 609498. - For further contact details and details of all activities, events etc in both parishes, visit the church web sites www.staugustine-aldershot.org.uk and www.parishofhawley.org.uk

LEEDS FIF, WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF LEEDS Belle Isle & Hunslet St John & St Barnabas, Sunday Mass 11am, Vicar: Fr Chris Buckley CMP 07858 427796; Cookridge Holy Trinity, Sunday Mass 10am, Vicar: Fr Paul Atkinson SSC, 0113 2931210; Cross Green St Hilda, Sunday Mass 0930 Vicar: Felicity Greenfield (Churchwarden) 07583 155295; Harehills St Wilfrid, vacant: Sunday Mass 10am contact Lynne Dransfield [Churchwarden] tel: 0113 2730323

FIF, DIOCESE OF LINCOLN Resolution Parishes: Binbrook Group (Louth) Fr McEune 07411 761883; Edenham Group (Bourne) Fr Martin 01778 591358; Grimsby St Augustine vacant contact Mr D. Buten 07848 819068; Lincoln, All Saints: Fr Noble 01 522 524319 Skirbeck St Nicholas (Boston) & Fosdyke All SS (Kirkton) contact Fr J. Underhill 01 205 362734; Wainfleet Group (Skegness) Vacant until March contact Mr J. Seymour 01754 881046; Burgh-le-Marsh (Skegness) Vacant until March. Contact Miss L. Kent 01507 463275). Non-petitioning parishes information: South Lincolnshire - Fr Martin 01778 591358; North Lincolnshire - Fr Noble - 01 522 524319

FIF, DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER Blackley Holy Trinity, Society, Fr Paul Hutchins - 0161 681 3644; Lower Broughton The Ascension, Society, Canon David Wyatt 0161 736 8868; Chadderton St Mark, Society Fr Steven Smith - 0161 624 0535; Failssworth Holy Family, Society, Fr Paul Hutchins - 0161 681 3644; Hollinwood St Margaret, Society, Fr Tom Davis - 0161 681 4541; Leigh St Thomas & All Saints, Resolution, Fr Robert Eloff - 01 942 673519; Lightbourne St Luke, Society, Fr Paul Hutchins - 0161 681 364; Little Lever St Matthew, Resolution, Fr John Wiseman, 01 204 700396; Middleton Junction St Gabriel, Resolution Fr Steven Smith - 0161 624 2005; Moss Side Christ Church, Society, Canon Simon Killwick 0161 226 2476; Oldham St James with St Ambrose, Society, Fr Graham Hollowood - 0161 624 4964; Peel Green St Michael, Society, Fr Ian Hall - 0161 788 8991; Prestwich St Hilda, Society, Fr Ronald Croft 0161 773 1642; Royton St Paul, Society, Fr Graham Hollowood - 0161 624 4964; Salford St Paul, Society, Canon David Wyatt 0161 736 8868; Swinton and Pendlebury St Peter, St Augustine, All Saints, Society, Fr Jeremy Sheehy 0161 727 8175; Tonge Moor, Bolton St Augustine, Society, Fr Tony Davies 01204 523899; Winton St Mary

Magdalene, Society, Fr Ian Hall 0161 788 8991; Withington St Crispin, Society, Fr Patrick Davies 0161 224 3452

FIF, DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH Fareham SS Peter and Paul, Fr Roger Jackson 01 329 281521; IOW: All Saints, Godshill, and St Alban, Ventnor vacant; Good Shepherd, Lake, and St Saviour on the Cliff, Shanklin, vacant; Portsmouth: The Ascension, North End, Fr Benjamin Weitzmann 023 9243 9711; Southsea Holy Spirit, Fr Russell Lawson 023 9229 6364; Stamshaw St Saviour, Fr Benjamin Weitzmann 023 9243 9711

FIF, DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER Beckenham St Michael or Elmers End St James, 10.30am Sung Mass; Belvedere St Augustine, 10am Sung Mass; Swanley St Mary, 10am Sung Mass; Bickley St George, 8am Low Mass, 10.30am Sung Mass; Chislehurst The Annunciation, 8am Low Mass, 10am Sung Mass; Gillingham St Luke, Parish Mass 10.30am; Gravesend, Perry Street, All Saints, Sung Mass 10am; Higham St John, 9.30am Sung Mass; Sevenoaks St John, 9am Low Mass, 10am Sung Mass; Tunbridge Wells St Barnabas, 11am Sung Mass; all contact details from Fr Clive Jones frclive@tiscali.co.uk

FIF, DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS Society Parishes Bedford St Martin, Fr Norwood 07886 276467; Bushey Heath St Peter, Fr Burton 020 8950 1424; Luton: Holy Cross, Marsh Farm, Fr Brown 07867 494688; St Mary, Sundon & St Saviour, Fr Smejkal 01582 583076. (Please contact clergy for details of services)

FIF, DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY and IPSWICH Cookley St Michael and All Angels, Fr Jonathan Olanczuk, 01 502 470079, 9.30am Mass (3rd Sunday in Month); Ipswich St Bartholemew, Fr Paul Carter 01473 727441. Sunday Mass 10am; Ipswich St Mary at the Elms, Fr John Thackray 07780 613754. Sunday Mass 10.45am, daily Mass at 12.30pm; Mendlesham St Mary, Fr Philip Gray 01449 766359; Eye SS Peter and Paul - The Rev. Dr. Guy Sumpter 01 379 871986.

FIF, DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD Bolton-on-Deane St Andrew, Fr Schaefer 01 709 898426; Cantley St Wilfrid, Fr Andrew Howard 01302 285 316; Doncaster Holy Trinity, Fr Stokoe 01302 371256; Edlington St John the Baptist, Fr Richard Hume 01709 231326; Goldthorpe SS John and Mary Magdalene, Fr Schaefer 01709 898426; Hexthorpe St Jude, Fr Richard Hume 01709 231326; Hickleton St Wilfrid, Fr Schaefer 01709 898426; Hoyland St Peter, Fr Parker 01226 749231; Mexborough St John the Baptist, Fr Morrison 01 709 582321; Moorends St Wilfrith, Fr Pay 07530921952; New Bentley SS Philip and James, vacant; New Cantley St Hugh, Fr Stokoe 01302 371256; New Rossington St Luke, vacant; Ryecroft: St Nicholas vacant; Dalton: Holy Trinity, vacant; Doncaster SS Leonard & Jude (with St Luke) Fr D'Silva 01 302 784858; Sheffield: St Bernard, Southey Green and St Cecilia, Parson Cross, Fr Ryder-West 0114 2493916; St Catherine, Richmond Road, Fr Knowles 0114 2399598; St Matthew, Carver Street, Fr Grant Naylor 01 142 665681; St Mary, Handsworth, Fr Johnson 01142 692403 (contact clergy for Mass times, etc)

FIF, DIOCESE OF TRURO Falmouth St Michael, Penwerris Fr Michael Oades 01326 341304; Truro St George the Martyr, Fr Christopher Epps 01872 278595

◆ AFTERWORD ◆

George Bush looks forward as he looks back

The sign of Jonah is a mixed signal; on the lips of Jesus, it seems to be the sign of repentance with which Jonah excoriated the people of Nineveh and which he had to negotiate with a God who couldn't resist being merciful. At the hands of the Church, the sign of Jonah was rather the way in which Jonah lay mysteriously in the belly of the whale for three days, prefiguring the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It is a mean trick of religious people to want to fill God's heaven for him; enough for us to note the mercy of God and his saving dynamic by which he bears the peril of our chaos and failure – he absorbs the judgement.

We are, however, bound to read the signs of the times. Seemingly in 1688 the multitude would gather at the tower at St Mary-le-Bow on Cheapside to see if the dragon vane aloft was pointing east or west – west being a 'Popish wind' favourable to James II, and easterly being auspicious for the armada of William of Orange. I tended not to check during my time, though you will imagine my sympathy.

*Inclusion is not a Christian value, but
'welcome' assuredly is. Anyone can
include; welcome is harder*

All Christian liturgy is a meditation on the faithfulness of God and the faithfulness of institutions, parishes, or persons is no more than a glancing reflection of that. I could no more navigate my predecessors' worlds or Church than the coming generations can mine. There will be some from whom I have inherited prejudices, and a good few to whom I have passed them on unexpurgated. St Paul's first letter to the Christians at Corinth, set down only a generation after the resurrection, is a clear testament to the way in which Christians are always caught in quarrels about the need to refine the tradition, to be yet more faithful to the dynamic of repentance, death and resurrection; and yet to heed the signs of the times, the whispers of the dawning of the kingdom.

In each generation, there will be those who cry 'It's all over', following some late innovation or dereliction. There is much about which I am less than sanguine in the coming Church; the triumph of biblicism is neither intelligible nor godly. And I am dismayed by the continuing amnesia of the age, hell-bent to consign the determining Christian culture to the boundary, such that the very charitable purpose which the Gospel inspired in these islands now deems the Church to be insufficiently inclusive! This has to be rubbish. Rowan Williams has commented lately that inclusion is not a Christian value – for we are all called to live by exacting Gospel standards – but 'welcome' assuredly is. Anyone can include; welcome is harder.

A friend, deploring some recent appointment, asked me by text when I thought the Church had begun its modern slide. I did not hesitate: 'When it ceased to kneel'. Of all the innovations of my years, I think this has been the most unhappy. Amongst what defined Anglicans 40 years ago was that we knelt to pray – when some other Christians did not. We have perhaps ceased to be a penitent and humble Church and have become somewhat entitled, even careless. This seems to be related to a view that the ministers of the Gospel expect to be fulfilled, to allow their gifts and priorities to define their contribution, rather than to discover the fulfilment in a species of raw service only.

At my last induction, in 2002, the previous bishop was at pains to point out that my appointment was not the 'late-flowering of the old boy network'; what can he have meant? I was ordained into a world of male ministry – only just, mind (at £5,000 a year); of regular, disciplined lay attendance; of clergy home-visiting as a principal afternoon task; of near universal Anglican funeral rites (closely run with baptisms and weddings too); of communication thoughtfully by post or 'phone; of handwritten homilies – rarely amended and full of errors, without access to a library; of small diocesan staffs; of religious education; of decided sympathy for the Established Church in working-class areas. All of this is assuredly over. Because we are not given to know the future but to press to it with faith in God, we can romanticise the past, insist on its priority, and worst of all treat the past as some kind of promise. But if I have reservations about the shape of the Church which is coming, to some extent at least I must resile my anxiety or fail in faith.

Paul in the Epistle was appalled that people were parcelling themselves out – to himself, to Apollos, to Cephas, and missing the wisdom of God's folly, just about as determinedly as Jonah. The fetishising of leadership is a particularly unnecessary turn.

We live assuredly under the most generous dispensation. My predecessors were many and varied. Such priests lived under the same generous dispensation, though we would not always embrace their views or recognise their challenges. St Paul, although he continues his assault on Corinth for many chapters, answers his own criticism shortly after; his words an endless encouragement. 'Everything is for you, whether it be Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or the present, or the future; it is all for you, and you for Christ and Christ for God.' **[ND]**

The Revd George R. Bush – a Past President of Sion College, former Chaplain to Lord Mayors and Sheriffs, Honorary Liveryman of the Grocers' Company, Honorary Freeman of the International Bankers' Company, and a Patron of the World Marmalade Festival – has recently retired as the Rector of St Mary-le-Bow.

◆ GHOSTLY COUNSEL ◆

Andy Hawes

Prayer and Poetry

It never ceases to amaze me how many people write poetry. I have heard the most moving and beautiful self-penned poems at funerals and weddings. The medium of poetry in all its various forms has the capacity to enter and explore subjects that prose finds difficult to compass. Poetry gives full weight to images, sounds, and has the ability to make connections that throw new light and insight into the everyday. Poetry can set off resonances of thought and emotion. Poetry can find the universal in the particular; the eternal in time. Poetry in one of its many verse forms can also be very memorable.

Poetry lends itself to spiritual reflection and prayer. Many of the greatest Christian mystics were also poets for example: St Francis, St Ambrose, John of the Cross. The English spiritual tradition is renowned for its poets from George Herbert, William Cowper, Charles Wesley, Gerard Manley-Hopkins, and more recently T.S. Eliot and R.S. Thomas. The list is endless and takes in Christians of every tradition. Many of our well-known and best loved hymns began as poems in an anthology. Poetry, music and song are essential to Christian worship.

Scripture, both the Old and New Testament, is jewelled with poetry. The 150 psalms, written according to their own conventions of composition, are found in the centre of the Bible. In a profound way they are that heart of all that Scripture is. Many of the



prophets wrote and preached in a poetic form. In the New Testament, poetry breaks through in both the Gospels and Epistles, not least in the New Testament Canticles and the hymns in the Revelation of St John the Divine.

Poetry can be a means of opening up prayer. There are many wonderful anthologies of Christian and mystical poetry. Any hymn book is a readily available source. I have always found poetry a gentle opening for prayer. It sometimes can only take a few lines, a striking phrase or image to trigger a deeper and more reflective mindset. Wordsworth described the writing of poetry as 'emotion recollected

in tranquillity'. The best poetry is always the fruit of deep engagement with experience. That is why writing poetry is, for many, a means of prayer.

This brings me back to the poems that people sometimes offer as a means of prayer and reflection in worship. To engage with profound experience and to wrestle with it, seeking the appropriate word or image, and then to craft it to fit a rhythm is very close to, and overlaps with, prayer. Poetry, as Ted Hughes taught, 'happens when the poet never loses touch with the object of their thought'. When that 'object' is Holy Scripture or the person of Christ then the poetic process is certainly prayer. I cannot recommend reading poetry enough, neither could I encourage people to write it more. Poetry is God's gift: a means of connecting soul and mind in beauty of form and sound. Thank God for poetry. **ND**

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The Right Revd Martyn Jarrett SSC
(formerly Bishop of Beverley)

The Right Revd Michael Langrish
(formerly Bishop of Exeter)

The Right Revd Lindsay Urwin OGS
(formerly Bishop of Horsham)

The Right Revd John Gaisford SSC
(formerly Bishop of Beverley)

The Right Revd Roger Jupp SSC
(formerly Bishop of Popondota)

The Right Revd Peter Ramsden
(formerly Bishop of Port Moresby)

The Right Revd Glyn Webster
(formerly Bishop of Beverley)

The Right Revd Dr John Hind
(formerly Bishop of Chichester)

The Right Revd Robert Ladds SSC
(formerly Bishop of Whitby)

The Right Revd Nicholas Reade
(formerly Bishop of Blackburn)

The Right Revd Peter Wheatley
(formerly Bishop of Edmonton)