



newdirections

January 2010
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serving Catholics and Evangelicals seeking to renew the Church in the historic faith

Faithful remnant

Michael Rear
on earlier visions
of unity

Also in this issue:

- Canon Roger Greenacre remembers Dr Eric Kemp
- Jonathan Baker on Dr Williams' Rome speech
- Clare Rabjohns on her new year's resolution

parish directory

BEXHILL-on-SEA St Barnabas, Sea Road Forward in Faith. Sunday - Parish Mass 11am, Third Sunday (Easter to All Saints): Evening Prayer and Benediction 4pm. Mass daily at 10am except Monday (but check the noticeboard), Second Tuesday: Walsingham Cell 10.45am. Sacrament of Reconciliation after Mass or by arrangement. Warm welcome. In the centre of Bexhill. For times of Confession and other information contact: Fr Roger Crosthwaite 01424 212036

BIRMINGHAM St Agatha, Stratford Road, Sparkbrook Catholic Flagship of the Midlands. Sunday Mass 11.15am. Good liturgy. Stunning building. Secure parking. Warm welcome. M42, junc 4, A3400 to city. Canon John Herve ssc 0121 440 4605. 'If it's worth believing in, it's worth travelling for!'

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

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

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

BOURNEMOUTH St Francis of Assisi, Charminster Road (corner of East Way) A *Forward in Faith* Parish under the care of the Bishop of Richborough. Resolutions ABC. Sunday: Mass 8am, Parish Mass 10am, Evening Prayer and Benediction 6.30pm. Further information from Fr Paul Berrett ssc 01202 529336 www.stfrancis-bournemouth.org.uk

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

BRIDPORT St Swithun A *Forward in Faith* Church. Sunday: Low Mass 8am; Solemn Mass 9.30am, Evening Prayer and Benediction second Sunday 6pm. Weekday Masses: Tues 7pm, Wed 8.30am, Thur 10am. Parish Priest: Fr Peter Edwards 01308 456588

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

BRISTOL Holy Nativity, Wells Road (A37), half a mile from Temple Meads Station A *Forward in Faith* Parish, Resolutions ABC. Sunday: Mass 8am, Solemn Mass and Junior Church 10am, Evening Prayer and Benediction 6.30pm. Mon 7.30pm Mass, Tues and Sat 9.15am Mass, Wed and Fri 10.15am Mass, 2nd Tuesday 7.30-8.30pm Eucharistic Adoration. Confessions: Saturday 10am. Days of Obligation: Solemn Mass 7pm. Fr James Brown ssc 0117 977 4260

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

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

St Agnes: January 21st

LONDON SE11 St Agnes, Kennington Park, St Agnes Place (nearest tube Oval or Kennington on the Northern Line) Resolutions ABC. A

Forward in Faith Parish, DSCR.

Sunday: Solemn Mass 10am.

Daily Mass: Tues 9.30am, Wed 9.30am, Thu 7.30pm, Fri 9.30am, Sat 9.30am.

Morning Prayer 9am and Evening Prayer 6pm daily. Bible Study: Wed 10am.

saintagnes.org.uk 020 7735 3860



Resolutions ABC. Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Solemn Mass 10.30am, Evensong and Benediction 6pm. Weekday Masses: Mon 10.30am, Tues 7pm, Wed 10.30am, Thur 12 noon, Sat 8am. Daily Offices. Parish Priest: Fr Stephen Bould ssc 01303 254472 www.stpetersfolkestone.org.uk

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

HARLOW St Mary Magdalene Harlow Common (southern side of Harlow, Chelmsford diocese) Resolutions ABC. Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Parish Mass 10.30am, Evensong and Benediction 6.30pm. For details of other services and Masses please phone Churchwardens: Peggy Lambert 01279 304829, Ray Parkes 01279 865186

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

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

INVERNESS St Michael and All Angels, Abban Street, Inverness IV3 8HH The Comper Jewel in the Highlands of Scotland. A *Forward in Faith* Parish.

Sunday: Solemn Parish Mass and Sunday School 11am, Vespers and Benediction 5pm (monthly). Midweek: Low Mass most days of the week; please see 'This Week' on the parish website or phone: Parish Priest: Fr Len Black ssc 01463 233797. VISITORS ALWAYS WELCOME! www.angelforce.co.uk

KETTERING St Mary the Virgin, Fuller Street and St John the Evangelist, Edith Road A *Forward in Faith* Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough. Mass: Sunday 10.15am; Fri 10am at St Mary's; Tues 6.30pm at St John's. Interregnum. Enquiries: Patrick Cooper 01536 420336

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

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

LEICESTER Blackfordby and Woodville Fr TVale 01283 211310; **High Framland Parishes** Fr P Botting 01476 870188; **Leicester** St Aidan, New Parks, Fr S Lumby 0116 287 2342; St Mary de Castro, vacanyt; St Chad, Fr M Court 0116 241 3205; St Hugh, Eyres Monsall, Fr A Jordan 0116 278 6288; **Narborough** Fr N Burton 0116 275 0388; **Scraptoft** Fr M Court 0116 241 3205; **Wistow Benefice** Fr P O'Reilly 0116 240 221 5

LIVERPOOL St Agnes and St Pancras, Toxteth Park A *Forward in Faith* Parish. Resolutions ABC. Sunday: Parish Mass 10am; Solemn Evensong and Benediction 6.30pm. Daily Mass. Sunday School. Glorious J.L. Pearson Church, with modern catholic worship, good music and friendly atmosphere. Parish Priest: Fr Christopher Cook

Continued on page 36

content

Vol 13 No 176

January 2010

4 LEAD STORY

Faithful remnant

MICHAEL REAR

former Anglican priest, on earlier moves towards union with Rome and the present hopes for the future

7 Keeping faith

SIMON KILLWICK

summarizes the reasons why we need to see the General Synod's legislative process through

8 Not so easily resolved

JONATHAN BAKER

disagrees with Rowan Williams

11 Mistresses of the Church

JOHN SHEPLEY

continues his historical review

12 A letter of thanks

JOHN PEARCE

is sorry to see friends leave but glad of so much they have shared

12 Too joyful by half

PAUL GRIFFIN

asks what the correct tone should be for Christian light-heartedness

13 When teams damage the Gospel

JULIAN MANN

explains why team working can be detrimental to the Church's reputation

17 New year resolution

CLARE RABJOHNS

calls us to renew our commitment to the sacrament of the altar

18 St Martin, Jeantes

A look at the twentieth-century transformation of a French church

23 RIP Dr Eric Kemp

ROGER GREENACRE

Remembers the late Bishop of Chichester

24 The enemies of friendship

DIGBY ANDERSON

On the people and ideas responsible for the contemporary neglect of Christian friendship

24 This spooky secular world

ALAN EDWARDS

On how to cope with the new paganism

25 An elephant in the crib

FR ANONYMOUS

On time-worn rural ways

26 From elsewhere

UN – Showdown with religion

LUTHERANS – Dissident plans in USA

BRAZIL – Not welcome here

USA – Same-sex church weddings

UGANDA – Anti-gay legislation

28 Stress factors

GEORGE AUSTIN

On clergy stress

29 Views, reviews & previews

A History Of Christianity

Ordo Recitandi Officii Divini Sacrique

Joy In All Things

Never Completely Submerged

St John Mary Vianney

Priest's Guide To Hearing Confessions

regulars

6 GHOSTLY COUNSEL

ANDY HAWES

on the need for sleep

8 HEARING THE WORD

PATRICK REARDON

on Aaron's rod

10 FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

ARTHUR MIDDLETON

on Fr Michonneau

10 DEVOTIONAL

MOTHER ST PAUL

on Mater Christi

DIRECTORY	2, 36
30 DAYS	16
EDITORIAL	20
LETTERS	21
FOOTNOTES	35
FIF UPDATE	36
LAST CHRONICLE	39
PEVS' DIARIES	39

12 SACRED VISION

ANTHONY SAVILLE

on the Bodelwyddan font

15 TRAWLING THE NET

ED TOMLINSON

on learning from hobbits

19 THE WAY WE LIVE NOW

GEOFFREY KIRK on an

Anglican model of Church

26 SECULAR LITURGIES

TOM SUTCLIFFE

on Handel's *Messiah*

35 TOUCHING PLACE

SIMON COTTON on St Katherine, Chiselhampton

and not content

An End of the World is Nigh sect decided that they had been vouchsafed its exact date. They called the faithful to a rally in London, so that 'the saved of earth' could gather for their transit to the skies. They all had bought return rail tickets.

My possibly apocryphal tale came to mind at the time of the Copenhagen Climate Change Chat-In. The world, it alleges, is facing disaster unless CO² emissions are cut (jumbo jets much to blame).

I had expected that television would show armadas of carbon-footprint-denying sailing ships taking the delegates and advisors (15,000 in all) thronging the waterways leading to Copenhagen, that 'salty old queen of the sea.' No so much as a sailing dinghy in sight. Ashore so many gas-guzzling limousines were needed to ferry delegates to the Conference that the Danes asked German car-hire firms for help.



Sadly, par for the course where many climate change doom-sayers are concerned. Al Gore, whose film has frightened more kids than the Witch in that other fairy tale, *Snow White*, apparently has a permanently floodlit mansion. Tracey Emin, whose latest masterpiece abandons the unmade bed for the unproved band-wagon of climate change, sleeps with the lights on because she's afraid of the dark – or possibly seeing one of her own compositions.

Come to think of it, we didn't see many doom-peddling bishops peddling pushbikes when the Anglican worthies arrived at December's Climate Change Service.

Human activity may be causing climate change, though we haven't yet found the fossil remains of prehistoric Ryan-Air jets that put an end to the Ice Age. Yet, as we leave the Noughties for the Teenies, please, prelates, may we have a teeny few sermons on changed human hearts as well as climate change?

Alan Edwards



LEAD STORY

The faithful remnant

Michael Rear shares his experience as a former Anglican and looks back to past hopes of reunion with Rome

Pope
Benedict's
plan is the
fulfilment
of hopes
cherished
since the
days of
Archbishop
Laud,
the
fulfilment
of the
original
ARCIC
vision

A much-respected Canon who became a Roman Catholic some years ago was asked by the Roman Catholic bishop why he wanted to leave the Church of England. A moment's thought, and the Canon replied, 'Well, I don't really. I just feel I have no choice.' Many readers may be feeling like that, while others do not know what to do.

Some of you may remember I was Vicar of Walsingham for several years before becoming a Roman Catholic, and the Canon's response, 'I don't really. I just feel I have no choice,' neatly summed up what for me was the most difficult and dreadful decision of my life.

I had always been a 'Papalist', at least since the age of 18 when I joined the *Catholic League*. Members of the *Catholic League* believe the teachings of the Roman Church (apart from its decision about Anglican Orders), and work and pray for corporate reunion between the Church of England and the Holy See. Some would think it a disloyal and fifth column organization, but it had some notable members, not least my illustrious predecessor, Fr Hope Patten.

What kept us in the Church of England was the desire to help it become true to its Catholic heritage, so that one day, as a body, it would be ready to enter into full Communion with the Pope and the rest of the Catholic Church.

I concluded that by ordaining women the Church of England was no longer Catholic, no longer part of the Catholic Church. Catholic churches do not have women priests or bishops. As simple as that. I read with new eyes some words from the Decree of Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, para. 14: 'They could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse to enter it, or to remain in it.'

I can still sense the chill that ran through me. And so I left the Church of England for the Roman Catholic Church. Six months later, I met the Dean of Norwich, Fr Paul Burbridge, an old friend. He knew I had gone over and he was deeply unhappy too. He said to me wistfully, 'Michael, the Church of England isn't the same church now that we were ordained into.' And I murmured, 'No.' Then suddenly I thought, 'But it is! Of course it's the same Church.' And I realized at that moment that the ordination

of women had not stopped it being a Catholic Church. It never was Catholic; that is why it had ordained women. It claimed the right to do so at the Reformation. I realized that all my life I had belonged, not to part of the Catholic Church, but only to a wonderful and remarkable Catholic Movement within the Church of England. The shock made me feel ill.

In an article in the *Tablet* Professor Eamon Duffy put his finger on it:

Many of those who have left the Church of England have done so because they felt that the ordination of women constituted for the first time a radical break with universal catholic tradition and authority. This argument might have had less weight with them if the Anglo-catholic tradition had not so successfully forgotten or fudged the element of discontinuity and identification with a Protestant new beginning in the English Reformation.

Newman had once written, 'The Church of England is a National Church and nothing can make it Catholic again.' Like many others I hadn't believed him.

At that moment, I felt I had no choice and some parishioners in Walsingham felt the same, but it was a great shame to abandon the whole *Catholic League* idea of corporate reunion in favour of what we called 'individual submission.'

I wrote a book in the Eighties, entitled *One Step More*, in which I predicted the Church of England would not follow the American lead and ordain women because it was on course for reunion with Rome. I traced some earlier attempts at reunion, and concluded that with the ARCIC process proceeding well, reunion was round the corner.

Optimistic days indeed. But we had completely underestimated the strength of Evangelicalism and Liberalism in the Church of England. The whole of the church was never going to accept reunion. There had been attempts in the past.

Hopes ran high under Archbishop Laud, who mentions in his journal that on the very day he was appointed to Canterbury in 1633 he was seriously offered the dignity of being a cardinal. Nothing more is known of this mysterious offer, but soon a Benedictine monk, Dom Leander,

was sent to England by the Pope to report on the English Church. Dom Leander, a close friend of Archbishop Laud from their student days, had been expelled on suspicion of being a Catholic from St John's College, Oxford, where they had shared a room.

Dom Leander made extensive contact with Anglican bishops and his report was optimistic and lengthy:

In the greater number of the articles of the faith the English Protestants are truly orthodox... they contend they have been treated unworthily as heretics and schismatic; that greater differences than theirs were tolerated by the Council of Florence; and that the importance of Great Britain and its dependencies renders it an object of as much importance to reconcile her to the Roman Church, and as much worthwhile to call a special council for the purpose, as it could have been to obtain the reconciliation of the Greeks.

But he did note that the Puritans were very numerous and fierce. Dom

Leander suggested a way of reconciling 'moderate Papists and moderate Protestants.' This was by allowing:

- 1) Communion under both kinds;
- 2) Marriage of the clergy;
- 3) Liturgy in English;
- 4) The admittance of English Protestant clergy to benefices (coming to agree in points of faith) either by re-ordination *sub conditione*, or by way of commenda;
- 5) To allow Roman Catholics to take the Oath of Allegiance to the monarch.

The plan hotbed up. Gregory Panzani was sent as an agent and spent two years in England in detailed discussion with the King and others in Church and state. Opposition to unity, he noted, came from Jesuits and Puritans. Most Anglican bishops were in favour of unity.

Like Leander, Panzani spoke warily about the rising power of the Puritans. The Civil War broke out. King Charles was beheaded, going to the scaffold declaring: 'I die in the Christian Faith, according to the profession of the Church of England.' Archbishop Laud was impeached for 'corresponding with Rome' and 'treating with the pope's men in England,' and he too was beheaded.

When the monarchy was restored with Charles II what amounted to a Uniate Church was proposed:

- 1) The Archbishop of Canterbury to be designated Patriarch, responsible for governing the Church in the three realms, except a few rights reserved to Rome;
- 2) A Roman Legate, a native Englishman, to reside in England to exercise the rights reserved to the pope;
- 3) Existing archbishops, bishops and clergy to remain in office if they accept Catholic ordination;
- 4) An annual General Synod to be convened;
- 5) The King to nominate bishops;
- 6) Complete religious freedom for Protestants;

7) Priests and bishops could be married, though celibacy would be introduced later;

8) The Eucharist in two kinds for those who wish;

9) Mass in Latin, with English hymns;

10) A Catholic catechism based on Scripture to be published;

11) Some religious orders to be restored;

12) *The most disputed questions, like the infallibility of the Pope and his right to depose monarchs, not to be discussed either in the pulpit or in writings, though Catholic preachers could dispute with Protestants, providing they avoided the narration of miracles or speaking of a material purgatory.*

Again nothing happened. The Protestants were far too powerful. But as the centuries went by the vision of unity was kept alive by many individuals. The Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom was formed in

1838. At the first Lambeth Conference, in 1867, the Bishop of Salisbury presented a petition signed by more than 1,000 clergy and 4,500 laity urging the Anglican bishops to end the long separation of their church from Rome.



It was not until the Second Vatican Council that the time became more auspicious, and through the visit of Archbishop Michael Ramsey to

Pope Paul VI in 1966, the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) was created 'to work for the restoration of complete communion of faith and sacramental life.' Pope Paul VI assured Archbishop Coggan in 1977: 'these words of hope 'The Anglican Church united not absorbed' are no longer a mere dream.' Sadly they were.

In the 1930s the idea grew that part of the Church of England might be able to reunite with Rome. Fr Hope Patten espoused this idea, for he seemed to have a premonition that the Church of England would do or teach something that would dash reunion hopes and make it impossible for Catholics like himself to stay:

I am more and more coming to the opinion that Catholics in communion with Canterbury must consider the example of the Wee Frees of the Scots – the day cannot be far off when some of us will have to go out into the desert – and there prove our catholicity – after which perhaps a united body may be formed as a link.

What would have astounded Fr Patten is that Rome has now recognized the catholicity of Catholics in communion with Canterbury, without them having to go out into the desert and prove anything.

The ARCIC process goes on now, but without the purpose of restoring 'complete communion of faith and sacramental life.' Pope Benedict's plan is the fulfilment of hopes cherished since the days of Archbishop Laud, the fulfilment of the original ARCIC vision. **ND**

Uganda horror

Nigel Anthony on what's going on

The *Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2009* was introduced as a private member's Bill on 14 October in Uganda's parliament by MP David Bahati.

When tabled, the Minister for Ethics and Integrity, Dr James Nsaba Butoro, made a strong statement in support and urged greater sanctions of individuals and organizations 'supporting' homosexuality. When introduced, it carried the death penalty for certain aggravated activity; this has now been dropped.

The bill would also require anyone who is aware of anyone breaking the terms of this act to report them within 24 hours. If an individual does not do so he or she 'commit[s] an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding 250 currency points or imprisonment not exceeding three years.'

In an attack on the freedom of expression, a new, wide-ranging provision would also forbid the 'promotion of homosexuality' – including publishing information or providing funds, premises for activities, or other resources.

'This bill is a blow to the progress of democracy in Uganda,' said David Kato of *Sexual Minorities Uganda*. 'It goes against the inclusive spirit necessary for our economic as well as political development. Its spirit is profoundly undemocratic

and un-African.' Many MPs, churchmen and others are fearful of expressing opposition, on the basis of its confusion of terms. The Bill is apparently very popular as a clear and visible blow against corrupting Western culture – to be 'pro-gay' suggests support for this foreign post-colonial influence.

Sylvia Tamale, who teaches law at Makerere University, is one of the few prepared to acknowledge the clash of culture, 'Homosexuality or same-sex attractions have been part and parcel of African communities for time immemorial. But the terms 'homosexuality', 'lesbian', 'gay' – those are relatively new. And those are terms many Africans attracted to people of the same sex never use or never identify with.'

It is a strangely sinister story, not least because so little detailed information comes out of Africa, even with the vaunted power of the internet. The rising threat of Islam – Sudan borders Uganda to the north – must surely have something to do with this Bill, but this is never mentioned in the press. American Evangelical fundamentalists are widely quoted as being the principal inspirations, though just as many have joined the universal condemnation that has come from around the world.

The Bill is also, surely, an opportunistic diversion from the serious issues facing Uganda's policy-makers. This does not, however, insure that it will not become law.

In December the Swedish government said that it would revoke its \$50 million development aid to Uganda if the Bill passes. Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt stated that he 'thought and hoped we had started to share common values and understanding.' **ND**

If you are still looking for a New Year's resolution, you might set yourself the task of getting the right amount of sleep. Sleep is a favourite subject for many writers on Christian spirituality and readers might be surprised by what they say. Teresa of Avila had no time for correspondents who think that being woken up in the night is the Holy Spirit nudging someone awake to pray. She often made the point in her letters that the middle-aged especially need plenty of sleep. Bishop Edward King (whose centenary falls this year) advised that a good eight hours in a bedroom heated to 60°F was essential to being a good steward of the body (and he, despite a sickly childhood, was still in active ministry at the age of eighty-five!).

With profound irony Jesus pointed out to Peter, James and John that 'the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak' when they 'could not watch for one hour.' Jesus knew weariness and he knew that the remedy was a good sleep (we have a vivid account of him asleep on a cushion in the stern of a boat during a storm).

The essential message is that if you have a rule of life it ought to include

Ghostly Counsel

Sleep

Andy Hawes is Warden of Edenhall Regional Retreat House

a rule about sleep. This is a particular problem in our day and age. Gone are the days when the television would go off air at 11pm with the screen disappearing into a white dot. Day is as busy as night. The 24/7 world has its effect on us all.

The truth is we cannot separate the natural requirement for rest and recuperation out of any rule of life that takes prayer and attendance at worship seriously. I have had, in the past, a spiritual directee who was so unable to go to bed at a sensible time that he fitted timers on all the lights and appliances in his home and set them to switch off at 11pm. It was a practical solution to a practical problem. It is a challenge to

everyone's self-discipline.

Some people find sleep impossible for emotional or physical reasons. This is another problem and presents different challenges and opportunities. In these circumstances it is even more important to rest and to be very strict about it, but in these cases the quiet of night can bring an opportunity for clarity and intimacy in a relationship with God. If you are regular waker make sure you have some spiritual reading to hand, such as a favourite book of prayers or hymns. It is always good to have a copy of *Compline by the bed*.

Night Prayer or *Compline* is especially useful for those who find getting to sleep a problem. Some of its prayers can be quickly learnt by heart and some of its phrases can be used repeatedly to quieten the heart and mind, providing holy comfort and solace to the troubled and vivid imagination. I am thinking particularly of 'Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth,' and 'I will lay me down in peace and take my rest, for it is thou, Lord, only, that makest me dwell in safety.'

Keeping faith with the synodical process

Simon Killwick, Chairman of the Catholic Group in General Synod, summarizes the reasons why we need to see the General Synod's legislative process through

Our vocation as Catholic Anglicans has always been about witnessing to the Catholic nature of the Church of England, rooted in the faith and order of the undivided Church. Our vocation is about witnessing to the Catholic Faith both to England, and to the Church of England. We witness to the wider Catholic unity of the Church, which must include both Roman Catholic and Orthodox. As part of that witness, we and our forebears have keenly supported the ARCIC dialogue, with its goal of the visible reunion of Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches.

We have never been about simply becoming Roman Catholics; we have been about being Anglican and Catholic, looking for the reunion of the Churches. If we were simply about becoming Roman Catholic, we could and should have left the CofE long ago.

Our vocation is bigger and more complex; nothing has changed yet to prevent us from exercising this vocation with integrity. Were the Church of England herself to deny her own Catholicity and heritage by consecrating women bishops without provision at least for a line of bishops who hold to the faith and order of the undivided Church, then our vocation would become impossible to fulfil.

Still in play

Nothing has changed yet. The CofE is governed by the General Synod, under the constraints of the Worship and Doctrine Measure 1974. According to that Measure, the only way the CofE can make a definitive statement about where it stands in relation to worship and doctrine, is by giving Final Approval to either legislation or liturgy. Any resolution of the Synod prior to that is simply an expression of the opinion of the Synod at the time of the resolution being passed.

The vote to the effect that there were no theological objections to the ordination of women to the priesthood was just such an expression of opinion. Only when Final Approval was given to the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure was the matter definitely settled (and then, of course, it was settled with specific provisions for those unable to accept the ministry of women priests).

When the Synod voted in July 2008 asking for a legislative process to begin for women bishops, with code of practice for those opposed, this was another expression of the Synod's opinion at that particular time. In February this year, it seemed that the mood had changed, as the beginning of the legislative process was formally approved, with an

unprecedented number of Synod members voting against even beginning the process. We now know that the Revision Committee will bring forward draft legislation along the lines of a code of practice.

The mind of the Synod

However, the Revision Committee is not representative of the Synod as a whole: about half of it is made up of the Steering Committee (all of whose members must support the draft legislation) and the other half incorporates a range of views; the Revision Committee as a whole therefore has a strong inbuilt majority in favour of the draft legislation, with a code of practice.

The draft legislation will come back next year for Revision in full Synod, when the balance of voting could be different from July 2008 (remember that even on that awful occasion, 50% of the Synod voted for statutory transfer to be considered; the feel of the Synod in February 2009 was markedly more sympathetic).

Only after that Revision Stage will the final shape of the legislation be known.

It will not be until 2012 (at the earliest) that the draft legislation comes back for Final Approval (after making a tour around all the diocesan synods). A two-thirds majority for the legislation will then be needed in all three Houses; the flimsier the provision for opponents, the higher the chances that it will not get the necessary majorities (the size of the vote against in the House of Laity increases each time the question is put; 38% voted against in July 2008).

Not over yet

Were the legislation to fall at Final Approval, the Southwark Diocesan Synod Motion calling for the Act of Synod to be rescinded would then come to be debated. If we are seen to have behaved honourably and with integrity throughout the process, we may even be able to see off the Southwark motion.

We are therefore engaged in a long process with an uncertain outcome; our engagement in it may well be a way of the cross, but that is a noble and very proper Christian vocation. Ultimately, this is about the nature of the Church of England. Is she to maintain her Catholic heritage, or is she to deny it?

We as members of the Church of England are fully entitled to participate in the decision-making process; indeed it is our duty to do so, a proper fulfilment of our vocation as Catholic Anglicans. **ND**

only when Final Approval was given to the Priests (Ordination of Women) was the matter definitely settled

Not quite so easily resolved

Jonathan Baker takes another route to the meaning and significance of Holy Order to the one taken by Dr Rowan Williams

In his lecture at the Symposium at the Gregorian University in Rome on 19 November in honour of Cardinal Willebrands, the Archbishop of Canterbury argued that differences over the ordination of women should not, or need not, cause churches to be out of communion with one another. Using the language of first and second-order issues, the Archbishop suggested that once agreement over the nature and purpose of the Church has been reached (and the defining contours of its ministry likewise having been agreed), there ought to be a presumption that the question of who may exercise particular ministries is not a matter over which churches need divide.

Specifically, the 'catholic shape' of the ministry in both the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion means that what is common to each ought to be of far greater significance than the points of difference that separate them.

The matter of the sacrament

This is a promising ecclesiological argument. The difficulty with it, however, is that the disputed question of the ordination of women is not only (or even chiefly) about the mutual recognition of ministries, whether within a single church or communion, or between churches.

It is rather a dogmatic question, a fundamental question in sacramental theology: fundamental because it concerns the *matter* of the sacrament. Archbishop Rowan passes over this question in silence: save in one respect, itself highly disputed, to which we shall return in a moment.

Despite the years of discussion and debate about the ordination of women, their remains, sadly, a huge gulf of understanding between those Anglicans who (agreeing with the clear teaching of the Roman Catholic Church) see something sacramentally significant in the reservation of the priesthood and episcopate to men, and those who do not.

Put simply, the (Roman) Catholic position is this. Ordination confers on the candidate a distinct gift or charism, given by the Holy Spirit, whereby the newly ordained man is distinctively configured to Christ, in Christ's particular mode as Head of the (Eucharistic) Body, the Church, and its (or better, *her*) Bridegroom and Spouse. Because women are capable neither by sign nor nature of being Head or Bridegroom, the recipient of the sacrament of Holy Orders must be a male.

the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the royal priesthood of all the baptised

Agreed long ago

True, this account, in sacramental theology, of the reservation of the priesthood to males is not the ultimate ground on which the Catholic position rests; that, of course, is the dominical foundation of the apostolic ministry and the unbroken nature of the Church's Tradition, which no-one (not even the Pope) has the authority to amend.

But it is a dogmatic account of the Tradition which is thoroughly established in Roman Catholic teaching and not (contrary to some suggestions) an argument which has been 'dreamt up' in the recent past to shore up an otherwise arbitrary practice.

Inter Insigniores, the Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, approved by Pope Paul VI, on the reservation of priestly ministry to men, was, after all, published in October 1976, and therefore can be said to belong to the era of the early years of the ARCIC process.

Likewise, in the *Observations* published by the CDF on the Final Report of ARCIC I (1982), the ordination of women is noted as one of the obstacles to further unity, and

is identified as being 'of a *doctrinal* character [my emphasis], since the question whether one can or cannot be ordained is linked to the nature of the sacrament of Holy Orders.'

Of course, many Anglicans would share neither wholly nor even partially the account of sacramental symbolism, Eucharistic presidency and ministerial priesthood which informs Roman Catholic teaching. But neither can such an account be considered unequivocally to be contrary to an Anglican understanding of these matters.

Indeed, despite the resolution of the General Synod in 1975 that there are 'no theological objections' to the ordination of women, Anglican praxis, whether via the package of provisions for those opposed which accompanied the 1993 Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure (and ensured its passage through Synod and Parliament), or as embodied in the careful and wide-ranging discussion contained in the *Rochester Report* (of which the Synod overwhelmingly took note) has continued to indicate that there is a legitimate diversity of theological understanding in play within the parameters of Anglican discourse.

A false Anglican tradition

I said that, in one respect, the Archbishop of Canterbury did engage with the approach to the question of the ordination of women via sacramental theology (rather than as a purely ecclesiological *crux*) in his Rome speech.

This was when he indicated that for some Anglicans, the restriction of ordination to males only implies an unhappy distinction between the status, within the Body of Christ, of baptised women and baptised men. Crudely, this argument has been summed up and advanced under the banner, 'If you can't ordain us [women], don't baptise us.'

This slogan wholly neglects the fundamental argument in Catholic

teaching, and which is surely not inimical to a classically Anglican theology of ordination, that the ministerial priesthood (and, par excellence, the episcopate) is *at the service of* the royal priesthood of all the baptised, and is not simply an extension of it. It belongs to a different arena of the gifts of the Spirit.

Witness of the liturgy

Again, put crudely: ordination is not about the 'promotion' of certain Christians to positions of leadership and seniority (from which it would be wholly inappropriate to exclude some on the grounds of gender alone), but rather about a *distinctive* role within the (divinely appointed) sacramental economy.

Interestingly, the texts of *Common Worship* ordinal would appear to have been carefully composed to accommodate just such a view of the relationship between the royal priesthood of the baptised, and the ministerial priesthood of the ordained. In the introduction to each the three ordination rites (bishop, priest and deacon), the bishop who is presiding gives an account of the Church as the whole people of God.

This sentence then follows: '*To serve this royal priesthood [my emphasis], God has given a variety of ministries.*'

A ministry of service

There is no suggestion here that the gift of ordination is simply a superior form of the gift of baptism; quite the reverse. Again, no doubt there are plenty of Anglicans who would wish to put a different construction on this text. But must it not be agreed that a 'plain reading' suggests entire compatibility with Catholic teaching?

The ordination of women as priests and bishops cannot simply be considered under the heading of 'ecclesiological questions.' It is also a dogmatic and a doctrinal issue: and one which not only separates us from the Roman Catholic Church, but which continues to be an open question in our own church and communion.

Not the least consequence of this is, surely, that the Church of England must continue to give space for different conclusions about such an unresolved question to be held with integrity and confidence. **ND**

HEARING THE WORD

Aaron's Rod

The power and authority of the preached word of God

Patrick Henry Reardon, senior editor of *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*

Inasmuch as holy Scripture ascribes to the staff of Aaron such diverse wonders, it is hardly remarkable that Christian readers, over the centuries, have looked upon it as the bearer of numerous mysteries.

We may begin by mentioning that the underlying Hebrew word, *matteh*, not only means 'staff' or 'rod,' but also 'tribe.' It was a symbol, in fact, of tribal authority. Thus, Aaron's *matteh* indicated that he was, first of all, the leader of the priestly family, the tribe of Levi. It was entirely appropriate, therefore, that eventually it was kept in the Holy of Holies, along with the Tables of the Law [Hebrews 9.4].

Applied to the pastoral ministry of preaching, the staff of Aaron represents the authority with which the preacher proclaims the Word. The Christian pulpit is not the forum for the sharing of a preacher's ideas, not even his theological exegetical ideas. It is the place from which the seed of the Word is sown. What is conveyed in the preaching must be nothing other than the Gospel itself.

Thus, some months after evangelizing the Macedonians, Paul wrote to them, 'we preached to you the Gospel of God' [1 Thessalonians 2.9]. Paul sums up that experience: 'When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe' [2.13].

A sign of strength

The staff of Aaron is more than a sign of his authority, however; it is the channel of power. This is what distinguished it from the other tribal staffs of Israel. Two narratives, in particular, illustrate the power of Aaron's priestly staff.

First, Aaron's staff is powerful against the satanic forces represented in the rule of Pharaoh. Even before Egypt was visited with a single plague,

that *matteh* became a snake and devoured the staffs of the sorcerers [Exodus 7]. Then, through the same instrument the Lord visited Egypt with the plagues.

If, then, we understand Aaron's staff to symbolize the ministry of preaching, the account in Exodus indicates its aggressive, confrontational, and apologetical aspects. His message must be 'mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ' [2 Cor. 10.4–5].

Second, Aaron's staff is the bearer of both beauty and nourishment, because we read of it: 'the staff of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds' [Numbers 17.8].

Almond blossom

I understand those blossoms to indicate the rhetorical skill in which the Gospel is conveyed. Aaron's staff is not employed to hit people over the head, but to attract their adherence by the beauty of the Gospel and the sweetness of conscientious persuasion. It is the preacher's task to attract his hearers to conviction. The Lord compares his Word to honey, after all.

The ripe almonds on Aaron's rod I take to mean the spiritual nourishment provided by pastoral preaching. If the content of the sermon really is the Word of God, then it really will be that by which man lives. It will accomplish what God has promised with respect to his Word: 'For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, / And do not return there, / But water the earth ... So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; / It shall not return to me void, / But it shall accomplish what I please, / And it shall prosper in that for which I sent it' [Isaiah 55]. **ND**

faith of our fathers

Arthur Middleton on renewed expressions of parish life
inspired by Fr Michonneau's writings

The trend in contemporary worship is towards attractive services to communicate political or sociological information, enhancing the feel-good factor and instant comprehension. 'Fresh Expressions' culture is part of post-ordination training. Media technology makes worship an advert for media faith instead of an encounter with God and is not a mirror of reality.

Unit of mission

Trivialized religion robbed of serious intentions becomes a branch of show business, making worship a means to some other human end. The assumption is that God exists for man and heaven for earth and worship has no value unless it contributes to the immediate benefit of people assessable in terms of this world. Worship reduced to religious concert loses its meaning, ceases to be prayer and becomes an action to manipulate group activity, depriving it of power.

Fr Michonneau's *Revolution in a City Parish* (1949), where the

parish not the diocese is the unit of mission, influenced thoughtful people. His purpose was to advance the boundaries of the living Church everywhere by using the parish for such growth. Traditionally, it had been the expression of religious community life across Europe embracing all living within it, attenders and non-attenders. By 1949 things were different. Many were spiritual drifters, others aggressively irreligious and hostile to Christianity, and the majority were religion-less. With insufficient clergy it is hopeless to operate the parishes as in the days of faith.

Well-springs of evangelism

But the parish can become an outpost for re-conquest. The priest is the evangelist at the head of a spiritual fighting force which must include a lay apostolate ready to bring Christ into the homes and hearts of parishioners, and realizing they are not proclaiming the Christian message for the first time, which makes it more difficult. Today, 'We've heard all that before' is

the prevalent attitude and they look elsewhere for values.

Central to Michonneau's thesis is the need for priest and laity to participate in the reverent and ordered celebration of the Sunday Eucharistic liturgy and the revival of the basic practices of prayer life. These well-springs of evangelism, Eucharist and Daily Office, are where the interior life of prayer for priest and laity is sustained by a constant solicitude for the work of Christ for the sanctification of the parish.

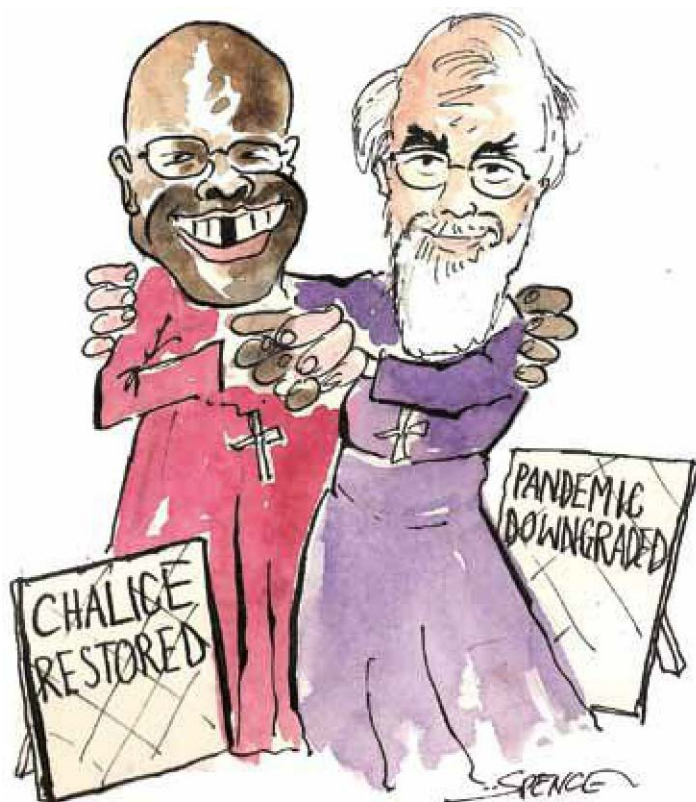
Here lies the inspiration for mission, as priest and people are conformed to the sacrificial love of Christ that becomes the seed-bed of an evangelistic holiness. This must be the way of the apostles of modern Europe in which they become sufficiently alert and dynamic to persuade people today that they are mistaken and that the quest of man leads to Christ.

These 'renewed expressions' of parish life recall us to the truly Catholic concept of the all-embracingness now replaced by a pervasive congregationalism. Let our parishes become outposts of spiritual attack, with priests and laity so mobilizing parish life to attract the forgotten and unattached into the sacramental life of the Church. Christ came for all, Christ died for all, Christ calls all, not only the practicing Anglican.

Renewed expressions

Bishop Frank Weston told the 1923 Anglo-Catholic Congress, 'You have got to come out from before your Tabernacle, and walk, with Christ mystically present in you, out into the streets of this country, and find the same Jesus in the people of your cities.'

Today priests have got to get away from their computers, the churning out of printed paper and the proliferation of meetings. It is easy for mere tools to become magnificent obsessions becoming obstacles that kill personal contact as they keep the priest off the streets. **ND**



'We did it!'

Mistresses of the Church

John Shepley continues his historical review of the fatal flaws in the Anglican Communion that hastened its imminent collapse

When the Windsor Report cited the process leading up to women's ordination as an exemplum of the workings of the Instruments of Unity, it was with a culpable lack of irony. Two of those Instruments had been created, in part at least, in response to the crisis. They had not worked well. They had been adeptly outmanoeuvred by the proponents of the innovation. But the irony lay elsewhere: in the fact that the very means by which women had been admitted to Holy Orders had fatally compromised the orders themselves.

In 1990 (long after the damage had been done) the Cameron Report to the General Synod of the Church of England gave a classic account of the purpose and function of Orders. The bishop, the Report claimed, operates as both the focus and agent of unity on three planes: the local (in the diocese), the universal (across the worldwide Church), and the diachronic (across the Christian ages).

Never before

All this was destroyed with the ordination of women. In the diocese the unity of the college of priests gathered around their bishop had been fatally compromised. Bishops were no longer in unimpaired communion with their colleagues world-wide. By doing what the Church had never done (and oftentimes claiming thereby to have corrected the errors of the past) they had turned themselves into icons of discontinuity.

But, disruptive as these developments were, they were as nothing beside the effects of the doctrine of reception. In a vain attempt to shore up the crumbling 'bonds of affection', the Grindrod Report articulated the notion that women's orders were in some sense experimental or 'provisional', deferring to the Greek Kalends a final decision on the rightness or wrongness of the development. What no one at the time seemed to notice, in the hectic

pursuit of novelty, was the effect of all this on sacramental assurance.

Another function of Orders had traditionally been to guarantee the validity and authenticity of the sacraments which they ministered. The principle had been long established that, where the sacraments were concerned, the Church should always take the least doubtful course. This time-honoured principle of caution had now been cast to the four winds: Anglicans were ordaining to the sacred priesthood those of whose orders the best they could say was that they might one day be assured of their validity!

women's ordination was seen as a weapon in the struggle to alter deep-seated attitudes

It was ironic that the wise men of Windsor saw this process as exemplary; ironic because the very process they were lauding had largely contributed to the crisis they were seeking to address. Politically it had confirmed the proponents of change in the techniques of the pre-emptive strike. Theologically it had opened up a vacuum which nature would rush to fill. The doctrines of provincial autonomy and reception had stripped Holy Orders of the greater part of their meaning and purpose: it remained therefore for those who had brought about this change to fill the gaps.

The new irony

The role of orders in expressing and effecting sacramental and structural unity was slowly replaced by a notion of 'gracious conversation' and of 'the highest possible degree of communion', whilst frankly abandoning within the Communion that 'full visible unity' which had previously been the goal of Anglican ecumenism.

The role of orders in assuring the

faithful of the authenticity and efficacy of sacraments was replaced with a new function – as a vehicle of social and moral change in secular society. A major factor in the ordination of women to the priesthood had been its (somewhat improbable) part in the wider feminist agenda. 'If God is male, not female, then men are intrinsically better than women. It follows then, that until the emphasis on maleness in the image of God is redressed the women of the world cannot be entirely liberated. For if god is thought of as simply and exclusively male, then the very cosmos seems sexist' wrote Bishop Paul Moore of New York (whose simultaneous commitment to the gay agenda has more recently emerged).

The femininity of God

He went on: 'God as Father and God as Son invoked by a male minister during worship creates in the unconscious, the intuitive, the emotive part of your belief an unmistakable male God. However, when women begin to read the Scripture, when they preside at the Eucharist, when they wear the symbolic robes of Christ, this unconscious perception will begin to be redressed and the femininity of God will begin to be felt.'

Women's ordination, in short, was seen as a weapon in the struggle to alter deep-seated attitudes and 'prejudices'. Orders in the Church, which had been stripped of their primary purpose, had simultaneously gained another – albeit one which the Christian centuries had not envisaged and to which they did not lead. This, in turn, accorded with another set of basic liberal assumptions: elevating functionality (what priests and bishops do) over ontology (what they are and exist to be).

The lesbian agenda succeeded logically and naturally to the feminist agenda. Grindrod had effectively made Windsor inevitable, and at the same time ensured that it would be ineffectual. **ND**

A letter of thanks

John Pearce is sorry to see friends leave but glad of so much they have shared

Many of you will soon be going home, having been welcomed so generously by this visionary Pope. As you go, I want to say 'thank you' to my friends for all that you have done. Of course I have had my disagreements but I shall miss you as, with your going, the CofE becomes overwhelmed by liberals (in the wrong sense of the word) and unbelievers. Ever since the Non-Jurors and before them, there have been Catholic-minded members of the Church of England, but the Oxford Movement crystallized a party with clear aims, many of which have been achieved.

The call to holiness

But I want to thank you for a variety of things which are fundamentally uncontroversial but which were much needed. First of all, I thank you for the recovery of serious prayer and meditation. It was not so long ago that any serious Catholic parish would begin each weekday with Matins, Meditation and Mass. But it is also true that you reminded us of the great purpose of serious prayer which is: 'I look at him and he looks at me.'

Thank you also for a new dedication and aspiration for holiness. Some of the most godly people I have ever met have come from your tradition – ascetic men and women whose sole aim was the glory of God: 'Lord let thy kingdom move on – over my body.'

The retreat movement was also one of your great gifts to the English Church, and I think with deep thanksgiving of many retreats such as one by the SSJE in that sacred chapel in Marston Street and of Fr Algy SSE, at West Mailing. It is profoundly sad that this insight is being lost as more and more so called 'retreats' become mere discussion times.

The foundation of the Religious Life was a remarkable

phenomenon in England, with large numbers of men and women seeing this life and work as their calling from the good Lord. And again this most significant part of the life of the church is now being lost.

Holy Communion

The re-establishment of the Holy Communion as the major service of worship is owed to you, as it is also to John Wesley. Now, instead of thrice-yearly communions, it is normal for most Anglicans to communicate every Lord's Day.

No less important was the re-discovery of moral theology and a serious approach to godly living for the laity as well as the clergy. Alongside of this, was the re-discovery of the practice of private confession and serious self-examination. Sadly a real sense of human sin is in fact disappearing from our liturgy and our church generally. Do you remember how we used to begin our preparation for our Sunday Communion on Fridays?

While some of the exuberance of our Anglo-Catholic parish churches owed more to Spain than to English tradition, it is nevertheless true that you reminded us of beauty as an eye-gate to God, so that now most churches are places of peace and beauty, where we can go and pray. Nevertheless there are an increasing number of churches which are losing this insight and becoming littered places of meeting with man rather than God.

We owe you so much, but we hope that you will be happy in your new home. Be thankful for what the English Church has given you. We shall miss you sorely, my friends, not least that we shall not be able to argue with you over the *epiklesis* and the *anamnesis* and the true nature of 'Apostolic Ministry'!

Go home with God, and with our love. **ND**

Too joyful by half

Paul Griffin on a Christian light-heartedness and humour
What ought to be a Christian tone?

One's mind may fly to the average *Songs of Praise*, with the fixed smiles, the arm-waving and swaying to drums and trumpets, the determined air of 'Isn't Christianity fun?' Answer: goodness me, no, not like that.

Back, then, to the Sunday sermon in the middling church, where the preacher starts with a joke to get attention, then turns serious and devotes the rest of his sermon to telling us we all ought to be joyful in the Lord. 'Lift up your hearts,'

he says, and we dutifully say we lift them up to the Lord.

The memorial service

At this point we may ask ourselves what our Lord's tone is actually like. Is it like this service for habitual worshippers, or more like that at a Memorial service, where everyone works overtime to lighten proceedings, and as often as not the vicar sits helplessly, hearing of the deceased's fun-loving nature,

and lovable faults, and his passion for Gilbert and Sullivan? (So that was why the opening voluntary was the Overture to *The Gondoliers*.)

Then the grandchildren mutter their specially composed poems, and the standard pieces are trotted out about boats sailing over the horizon, and how 'I am not dead'.

If the deceased is not deceased, the vicar may well wonder, what on earth are we doing here? But he knows that the fumbling efforts of grieving relatives to reach out into unfamiliar territory are precious, and that the use of time-honoured forms and prayers is more effective when they are generally known by all.

When teams damage the Gospel

Julian Mann explains why team working can cause liberal policies to prevail, to the detriment of the Church's reputation

The rhetoric of the deanery review is rapidly changing. Before the recession, the talk was of how churches in a deanery could 'own' the need for greater team working. But now, with the diocese facing a significant budget deficit, the Area Dean is telling the deanery synod, 'We need to start working as a team before we are forced to.'

As an institutional prognosis, the Area Dean's comment is surely right. As John Richardson pointed out in an excellent article on his blog *The Ugley Vicar* about a *Times* news report that the Church of England will lose as many as one in ten paid clergy in the next five years: 'Of course, for many Anglicans, this is not news at all, especially if they are in rural areas (which means *anywhere* outside an urban environment). Typically, rural 'parishes' now consist of agglomerations of individual parishes, even into double figures. Recently I met a clergywoman from Norfolk looking after no less than fifteen. And the number of parishes involved is no guarantee of a full-time minister. In our local area another clergywoman is overseeing five parishes whilst holding down a part-time diocesan post.'

Theological differences

The problem with the rhetoric of the cluster is that it fails to face up to the profound theological differences between churches in a deanery. And that is ironic because the deanery review sales talk was all about respecting our theological differences. 'We are diverse, yet united. Let's celebrate our differences and yet learn to partner together in mission.'

But once the deanery review becomes incarnated in 'pastoral reorganisation', with clergy and Readers being licensed to the team rather than to individual parish churches, liberal policies tend to prevail and orthodox clergy

and congregations are vulnerable to being bounced into practices with which they are theologically uncomfortable.

Managerial pronouncements

Take remarriage after divorce, for example. The team adopts a policy of conducting marriage services for those who have been divorced. When St Griselda's-by-the-Pond had its own vicar, he offered a service of dedication after civil marriage instead of the full marriage service. Now the church finds divorcees being fairly freely remarried in its building, and the practice is now beginning to cause a scandal locally.

Mr Smith married his second wife in church shortly after the change in policy. The younger woman he has just run off with wants a traditional white wedding at St Griselda's. The Revd Jezebel Gomer-Jones told the Team Rector that it would be 'discriminatory' to deny the bride her dream. After consulting the Area Dean, he heartily agreed. But down at the Dog and Duck, the regulars are taking bets on the timing of number four.

Godly people have simply been ground down by the bureaucrats and the reputation of the Gospel is suffering by practices such as serial remarriage. That is why in these difficult times orthodox support networks such as Forward in Faith, Reform and Anglican Mainstream have a vital part to play.

They can provide invaluable legal advice to churches to ensure that they are not steam-rolled by high-handed managerial pronouncements that are often legally ambiguous if not erroneous. This is not for the sake of obstructive nit-picking but for the sake of faithfulness to Christ's revealed will for his ministry and mission. **ND**

At least these Memorials seriously acknowledge the importance of enjoying life in ordinary ways, as St Francis well understood, and as our Lord, who must be our model, made clear through all the years of his ministry.

I yield to no one in my admiration for St Paul, but one reason he seldom spoke of our Lord's ministry may well have been that it was not his own style to convey truths by jokes, whereas, allowing for the difficulty of translating them from one language to another, Jesus loved talking about planks in eyes and burying money and fiddling expenses, camels, sparrows, and his own amusing reputation as a wine-bibber and keeper of low company.

For reasons of obesity, or rather our fear of obesity, we could never think of him as a Friar Tuck, but I am sure he was more than a sound but neurotic misery, like James and John and the rest who worried about priorities.

Poo-pooing the po-faced

The ability to follow in his footsteps is certainly not limited to the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England, but one enjoys the memory of Friar Tucks there, and hopes the breed may not die out. I could name some members now, of whom one or two have lit up this excellent magazine. Often enough, 30DAYS sets out to show us the idiocies of the po-faced.

There is a time for profound seriousness, the Crucifixion not being a very light-hearted occasion, and the hardships and difficulties of following Jesus being made abundantly clear over the centuries, so we can never expect to achieve the light-heartedness of our great Exemplar, but as far as lies within us it is right that the general tone of the way we live in the lovely world we have been given should follow our Lord's way.

Our indispensable nineteenth century showed this in the works of Jane Austen, Anthony Trollope and Charles Dickens, who expressed it clearly enough in Messrs Collins, Slope and Stiggins. How they would grace 30DAYS!

devotional

Mater Christi

Mother St Paul

The Law of God is clear. 'On the eighth day, the infant shall be circumcised.' The rite of Circumcision was to the Jew a sign of the Covenant which God had made with his nation – it marked him out as one of God's own people; it was a mark of his dependence on God, and also of his slavery to sin till God set him free.

On the fortieth day after the birth of her Son, the day when it is Mary's turn to keep the legal observances, and so to identify herself in all things with her Son, there is no need for her to be purified, before she is allowed to enter God's Temple; neither a need for her to present her first-born in the Temple and pay the ransom money for him, for his name is Saviour and he is himself the ransom for his people. There is no need; but Mary gladly does both, that she may enter more closely into the

spirit of her Son, who had undergone the rite of circumcision.

How many unnecessary humiliations and unpleasant duties do I undertake just for the sake of identifying myself with Jesus and Mary, and sharing their spirit?

We may imagine the Holy Family quietly setting out for their two hours' walk to the Temple, attracting no more notice than was usually attached to an event so common. Passing remarks were probably made as to its being the first time she was out; as to the disparity in their age; as to their poverty, for Joseph was carrying two doves, the offering of the poor, to be offered by Mary for her Purification.

Ah, how little the world sees. Extraordinary things are going on, though they are hidden, as is ever God's wont, under things most ordinary.

Mary, the purest of creatures, the Virgin of virgins, the Queen of Heaven, of Angels and of men, is bearing in her arms the Lord of glory, who is on his way to visit his Temple for the first time, and thus to fill it with a greater glory than ever Solomon's Temple had possessed.

Angels are worshipping and adoring at every step of that journey, and presently they will throw open wide the gate of the Temple to let the King of Glory in. And the humble and silent Joseph is playing a part which no Jew before or since has ever played; for though the verdict of the world is that he is too poor to afford to take a lamb, in reality he is too rich to need one, for is he not bringing to the Temple the Lamb of God? Let us try to see things and judge them from God's point of view – not from the world's. **ND**

sacred vision

St Margaret's, Bodelwyddan - Font

Just off the A55 on the north Wales coast, you pass that triumph of mid-Victorian Gothic known as the Marble Church. St Margaret's was built by Lady Willoughby de Broke in memory of her husband and consecrated in 1860. Inside is an impressive (rather than attractive or devotional) array of different marbles of all colours, and tucked away at the west end of the north aisle this most unusual font. Art? Bad art, if you will, but striking.

To the modern sensibility the delicate vulnerability of the two young girls, holding the shell for the baptismal water, is all too reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's photographs of Alice Liddell, taken at much the same time. Around the base are the words, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me; and forbid them not.'

The sculptor – no doubt with the express connivance of the architect and donor – has managed to subvert one of the two Dominical Sacraments.



Is this truly the sacrament of 'spiritual regeneration', or is it rather what most would have preferred to call a 'Christening'?

It is easy to see why faithful believers could become such fierce advocates of adult baptism alone, if *this* is the public expression of the meaning and significance of infant baptism.

It is all the more effective as a demonstration of determined heresy for being out of keeping with the rest of the interior of the church. One would expect a stout, multi-coloured, marble-columned, 'ordinary' font, echoing perhaps the pillars of the nave.

Instead, we have this gloriously irreverent (or blasphemous) subversion. Think of it as of a piece with contemporary installation art, and its strange originality has a certain appeal.

Anthony Saville

TRAWLING THE NET

Learn from hobbits

Ed Tomlinson turns to Tolkein for an accurate depiction of the nature of Christian life and the importance of working for the common good

There can be no denying the Church owes a debt of gratitude to Nicky Gumbel, the Vicar of Holy Trinity, Brompton, who launched the *Alpha* campaign, proving that evangelism can work in the spiritual wilderness of twenty-first-century Britain. Yet, whilst truly rejoicing in the unparalleled success of *Alpha*, I do have one major gripe!

I am seriously concerned that *Alpha* gives a false impression of Christian life. View the accompanying videos, mainly depicting middle-class 'hotties' experiencing ecstasy in the name of Jesus, and you easily assume that conversion leads to everlasting happiness, as if meeting Jesus helps you walk into a never-ending set of *The Sound of Music*.

The hardest task

Now there is a joy in knowing Christ, one which surpasses all this world has to offer, but Christian living is far from rosy. Indeed it is the hardest task imaginable, for you must not only battle the world and the devil – you must also conquer your 'self'. Unless the convert considers the cost of following Christ, they will certainly fall at the first hurdle.

In order to exorcize those *Sound of Music* expectations, which accompany the worst type of Evangelical conversion, we should perhaps offer every Alpha member a copy of a different film, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. For here we unearth a more accurate depiction of Christian living, an allegory that Tolkien admits is present in the text.

In the film (or book, which is better) Frodo, a hobbit, is asked by Gandalf to set out on an incredible journey. This is the moment of conversion, the start of the lifelong pilgrimage, which began for us real believers at baptism. The task will demand all he has to give, but it is nevertheless the only path to salvation. He must abandon his cosy

life in the Hollow, step out in faith and confront all that is evil. What lies ahead is a life of struggle for the sake of all that is noble.

Never alone

And yet Frodo will never be alone. Outnumbered? Yes. Threatened? Undeniably. In danger at all times? You'd better believe it. But never alone. For around Frodo gathers a band of faithful friends, who not only understand his trials but help him overcome them. They are a meagre

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inspiring of friends, the
Gandalf of our day**

rabble, but without them Frodo could never succeed.

And so the authentic Christian will also find themselves outnumbered, misunderstood, misrepresented, and threatened within the Church and without. In order to survive the pilgrimage of faith, they will need true and loyal friends who share their faith. This point was aptly made by Digby Anderson in last month's ND in his call to 'recover the ideal of Christian friendship'.

Now let me make this month's link with the worldwide web, tipping my biretta to Fr Hunwicke. For he too picks up this theme in a recent blog entry:

Could it be that at long last we Anglican Catholics have a friend? The old Bavarian gentleman? Let's try to treat him well. We are so unused to having friends that there is the risk of our being somewhat unpractised in our handling of them.

'The old Bavarian gentleman' – I love it, as I love Pope Benedict! For he is surely the most inspiring of friends, the Gandalf of our day! One who speaks clearly of Christ, offering

faith, hope and love. Who else champions orthodoxy as he does and confronts the evils of our day? And so, returning to *The Lord of the Rings*, let us consider a final lesson from the Gospel according to Tolkien!

Faith under threat

Sauron was a terrifying and hideous foe, Saruman a dread enemy. The darkness descending on Middle Earth was every bit as dangerous as the forces of secularism, atheism and false ideologies that descend on us today. To defy the evil threat in Middle Earth, reconciliation and unity were key to Frodo's survival. However impressive Gandalf might be, he could only overcome the darkness if the elves, men, dwarves and trees forgot past grievances, forgave ancient sins and worked together for the common good.

If rumours from the Vatican are true, this is what Pope Benedict is doing – with the Eastern Orthodox, Catholic Anglican and all who stand for the faith of the ages. The Ordinariate is no attempt to 'poach clergy', as some ridiculously claim! The Holy Father is drawing all true Christians together under the banner of Christ. Oh that he could have included all Anglicans in this number! But alas, the desertion of Christ by many has rendered this impossible.

This call for unity comes because the faith is under threat in our day. The battle with darkness is upon us! So with whom shall we stand? With the 'old man of Bavaria', who proclaims the Gospel of Christ so boldly? Or with the bushy academic, whose church now crumbles at his feet? Who is he but the glassy-eyed Theodin, held under a spell by nefarious beings who whisper poison in his ear whilst bringing down his house from within? **ND**

