

# newdirections

November 2010

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



## Neither Catholic nor Reformed

Nigel Atkinson on the current posture  
of the Church of England



### *Also in this issue:*

- Mark Woodruff and John Turnbull on the Papal Visit
- Geoffrey Kirk at the National Assembly of Forward in Faith
- Digby Anderson on religious broadcasting



# parish directory

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

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

**BIRMINGHAM** **St Agatha, Stratford Road, Sparkbrook (B11 1QT)** 'Any similarity between the Church of England and St Agatha's is purely coincidental!' (A Diocesan Official - 2007) Sunday Mass 11am. Canon John Herve ssc - 0121 449 2790

**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, Fri, Sat 9.30am, Wed 10am, Rosary Mon 6.30pm. Parish Priest: Canon Robert McTeer ssc 01388 604152 [www.sthelenschurch.co.uk](http://www.sthelenschurch.co.uk)

**BLACKPOOL** **St Stephen on the Cliffs, Holmfield Road, North Shore** 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](http://www.ststephenblackpool.co.uk)

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

**BOURNEMOUTH** **St Francis of Assisi, Charminster Road (corner of East Way)** *A Forward in Faith Parish* under the care of the Bishop of Richborough. *Resolutions ABC*. Sunday: 8am Low Mass / Service of the Word with Holy Communion, Parish Mass 10am, Evening Prayer and Benediction 6.30pm monthly. For information about all services during the Interregnum contact Churchwardens: Martin Taylor 01202 570321 or Barbara Geatrell 01425 470370 [www.stfrancis-bournemouth.org.uk](http://www.stfrancis-bournemouth.org.uk)

**BRADFORD** **St Chad, Toller Lane** (B6144, 1 mile from city centre). Sunday services: Low Mass 8.30am, Solemn Mass 10.45am, Evensong and Benediction 6.30pm. Weekday Masses 8am (except Wednesday 7.30pm and Thursday 9.15am). Parish Priest: Canon Ralph Crowe ssc 01274 543957. *Resolutions ABC*. English Missal/BCP [www.st.chads.dial.pipex.com](http://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: Solemn Mass and Junior Church 10am, Friday Mass 10.15am.

The parish is in interregnum. Contact: Philip Goodfellow, Churchwarden 07733 111 800 [phil@goodfellow.org.uk](mailto:phil@goodfellow.org.uk)

**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; *Gredo Gynru*. **Bute Street St Mary**: Sunday: Solemn Mass 11am; **Pentre Gardens St Dyfrig** and **St Samson**:

## All Saints: November 1st

### WESTON super MARE

#### All Saints with St Saviour, All Saints Road

Sunday: Parish Mass 10am, 2nd Sunday: Evensong 6pm,  
4th Sunday: Compline and Benediction 6pm.  
For daily Mass contact the Parish Priest, Fr Peter Bolton CMP 01934 633910



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

**CHARD** **The Good Shepherd, Fumham**. *Resolutions ABC* Sunday: Mass 8am, Sung Mass 9.45am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction (3rd Sunday only) 6pm. Weekday Masses: Tues 10am, Thur 10am. Contact: Fr Roger Pittard 01460 61012

**CHARLESTOWN CORNWALL** **St Paul** *Resolutions ABC* Sunday: Low Mass 7.45am, Parish Mass 9.30am, Evensong 6.30pm. Daily Mass (except Fri) 9.30am. Parish Priest: Fr John C Greatbatch ssc - 01726 75688 [frjohn@orange.net](mailto:frjohn@orange.net)

**CHELMSFORD** **The Ascension, Maltese Road** (10 minutes walk from the station) *A Forward in Faith Parish* under the Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: Mass 8am; Parish Mass 9.00am followed by Parish Breakfast. Weekdays: Tues 7pm, Wed 9.30am, Fri 8am, Sat 10am. Modern rite, Traditional ceremonial. Parish Priest: Fr Ivor Morris 01245 533914 [www.ascensionchelmsford.org](http://www.ascensionchelmsford.org)

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

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

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

**DOWNHAM MARKET, NORFOLK** **St Edmund's on**

**A10 and railway between Ely and King's Lynn**. *ABC*. Daily Mass etc. Sunday Parish Eucharist 9.30am. Good road and rail links. Handy for Walsingham and Coast. A good place to visit and a good place to live. Tel: 01366 382187, email: [rector@saintedmund.org.uk](mailto:rector@saintedmund.org.uk), web: [www.saintedmund.org.uk](http://www.saintedmund.org.uk)

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

**FOLKESTONE** **Kent, St Peter on the East Cliff** *A Forward in Faith Parish* under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough. *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](http://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

**HADDINGTON** (19 miles east of Edinburgh) **Shrine of Our Lady of Haddington** (within the historic St Mary's Church). Saturdays 6th November and 11th December: 11.30am Eucharistic Service with Communion from the Reserved Sacrament - further information from Dr Michael Thrusfield on 0131 650 6223 - [m.thrusfield@ed.ac.uk](mailto:m.thrusfield@ed.ac.uk)

**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. Weekday Masses: Tues 7.30pm; Wed 9.15am; Thurs 10am; Fri 6.30pm; Sat 9.30am. Vicar: Fr John Corby ssc 01279 453848

**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](http://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. Parish in 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](http://www.stlukeskingston.co.uk)

**LEAMINGTON SPA** **St John the Baptist** *Parish under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet. Resolutions ABC*. Daily Mass.

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Perhaps the most irritating thing about Anglicans is their unremitting smugness. I am sick and tired of the mantra about Anglican inclusiveness, as though there were anything in the Anglican past which demonstrated openness and tolerance of dissent. From the Tyburn martyrs through the Test Acts to the persecution of the nineteenth century ritualists the Church of England has had a proud and continuous record of persecuting (sometimes to the death) those who disagreed with it.

The notion of some broad sixteenth century compromise – the so-called Elizabethan settlement, which somehow anticipated all the best instincts of modern liberalism and current ecumenism – is an historical nonsense of massive proportions. Nor, to be frank, are many of those who embrace that ridiculous myth capable of giving it contemporary expression. The response to opponents of women in the



episcopate (who have repeatedly said that 'A Code of Practice will not do'), has been the less than eirenic: 'A Code of Practice will have to do.' And contemporary inclusivity has had its finest expression in the determination to remove the provisions for dissent embedded in the 1993 Measure and the Act of Synod and to replace them with next to nothing.

The myth of a benign Elizabethan settlement, in its turn gave birth to the notion of the Church of England as a 'bridge-church', graciously spanning the divide between Protestant and Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. Nothing could be further from the truth. In embracing innovations equally repugnant to the Church of the first millennium and the teachings of the Reformers it has proved itself equidistant from both. Not a bridge but a gulf.

John Shepley





## LEAD STORY

# Neither one thing nor the other

**Nigel Atkinson**, speaking to the Northern Sacred Synod, explains how the Church of England has sold its birthright as a Reformed Catholic Church.

we teach  
not an iota  
that we have  
not learned  
from the  
divine  
Oracles;  
and we  
assert  
nothing  
for which  
we cannot  
cite, as  
guarantors,  
the first  
teachers of  
the Church

I address you as a convinced Reformed Catholic this morning who is and has been for a number of years a member of Reform Council. But what I thought would be most helpful this morning would be briefly to outline for you why I am so opposed not only to the novelty of female presbyters but also to their potential consecration of bishops. In order to get to the heart of the problem and in order to highlight the seriousness of the situation we find ourselves in I would like to pose three questions. And the first question is simply; Is the proposed legislation in keeping with the Church of England's Protestant heritage? The second question I would like to ask is: Is the proposed legislation in keeping with the Church of England's Catholic heritage? And the third question is what can we do about it?

### Is the proposed legislation Protestant?

I think it was Cardinal Kasper in an address given to the Church of England Bishops' Meeting on the 5th June 2006 who seemed to suggest that should the Church of England move towards the consecration of women as Bishops then the Church of England would be moving a considerable distance closer towards Protestantism. I must say that when I first heard this I was mystified. I think I know what the Cardinal meant, in that many of the Reformed Churches of Europe have made radical moves towards a female presbyteral ministry. But although this is true on a sociological level, it is most certainly not true on a theological level. For to my mind it cannot lie within the genius of Protestantism to make a move that so blatantly flouts and disregards the plain teaching of Holy Scripture. And I say this because, at the heart of the Reformation, lay an unswerving dedication to authority of Scripture. Heiko Oberman writing in his book *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil* wrote 'what is new in Luther is the notion of absolute obedience to the Scriptures against any authorities; be they popes or councils'.

This was so because, to the Protestant Reformers, the Bible, the Scriptures were the canon and the rule, the measuring stick and the plumb line by which all practices in the Church were to be evaluated and judged. Thus, a favourite term that Luther used of the Bible was that it was an 'external word'. He used

this expression to emphasise that the Bible is objective and fixed - outside ourselves and therefore unchanging. It is, after all, a book. Neither ecclesiastical hierarchy nor fanatical ecstasy can replace it or shape it. It is "external," like God himself. You can take it or leave it. But you can't make it other than it is. It is a book with fixed letters and words and sentences.

And of course this Protestant understanding of Scripture meant that the Reformers began to reject the unscriptural excesses of the late middle ages. They rejected for example the idea that the Pope could remit sins. What he could do of course was to pronounce God's forgiveness, but the Reformers could not see in Scripture that he had this power in and of himself. And this concept that Scripture should rule the Church was an opinion that the Church of England began to embrace until it was eventually enshrined in Article 6 of the Thirty Nine Articles as well as elegantly phrased by Richard Hooker in his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.

Article 6 reads: 'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.' And Richard Hooker writes: 'If that Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that first place both of credit and obedience is due.'

This I suggest is simply the classic entirely orthodox and catholic view of Scripture. That as Hooker says it is to scripture 'that first place both of credit and obedience is due.' And the reason that it is to Scripture that the first place of both credit and obedience is due is because scripture is none other than the word of God. This of course is reflected in the Liturgy when after Scripture is read we say 'This is the word of the Lord.' It is in the light of this, therefore, that I find some Evangelical special pleading difficult to comprehend. For one sometimes hears the argument that the presbyteral ordination of women is a second order issue. But my argument is that if it is contrary to God's word written it is still spiritually dangerous to be disobedient to the Word of God. Unless one cares to argue that being a little disobedient to the Word of God is normative Christian practice.



My argument, therefore, is simple. One can argue in favour of the presbyteral ordination and consecration of women if one wants to. What I cannot see is that this could possibly be construed as a Protestant move, when at the heart of Protestantism lay a desire to let Scripture rule the Church and for the Church to obediently submit to Scripture.

### Is the proposed legislation Catholic?

Once again I think we can safely turn to the theological method hammered out by the magisterial reformers. Naturally, as they drew up their theological agenda they were condemned at the time by the late medieval Roman Catholic Church. The argument that Rome sought to apply was that the teachings of the Reformers were not catholic. In essence what they meant by this was that the Reformers were seeking to introduce into the Church novel and new doctrines that were alien to Christianity. What is surprising to me is that, for the Reformers, such an accusation was greeted with horror. I say it is surprising because it seems to me that today many evangelicals, who claim to be proud of their Reformed heritage, seem to think that by introducing new doctrines and new practices they are being especially led by the Holy Spirit - and that this should be regarded as a badge of honour.

But if we turn back to the Reformation what we discover is that there is not only an appeal to the Scriptures, but also to the teaching and practice of the universal, in other words, Catholic Church. Thus on reading Calvin we not only find numerous references to Scripture, but an almost equal appeal to the consensus of the primitive Church. Thus Calvin insisted not only that they teach nothing that cannot be deduced from Scripture but at the same time they assert nothing that could not be drawn from the dawn of the Christian Church. Note that parallel, dual appeal. They taught nothing not in Scripture and they assert nothing not in the Primitive Church.

So Calvin writes: 'we teach not an iota that we have not learned from the divine Oracles; and we assert nothing for which we cannot cite, as guarantors, the first teachers of the Church - prophets, apostles, bishops, evangelists, Bible expositors.'

Now it is important that we recognise the spiritual strength and appeal of this theological method. I want to stress it today not only so that those of us in Forward in Faith and those of us in Reform can understand each other better at a critical stage of our Church's life, but also because properly understood it needs to be understood that a rank and total appeal by an individual exegete to the Bible and its authority cannot be powerful enough on its own to overthrow the deposit and weight of the Church's teaching.

Hooker puts it well. He writes: 'if against those things which have been received with great reason, or against that which the ancient practice of the Church hath continued time out of mind...if against all this it should be free for men to reprove, to disgrace, to reject at their own liberty what they see done and practised according to order set down, if in so great variety of ways as the wit of man is easily able to find out towards any purpose, and in so great liking as all men especially have unto those inventions whereby

some one shall seem to have been more enlightened from above than many thousands, the Church did give every man license to follow what himself imagined that God's Spirit doth reveal unto him, or what he supposed that God is likely to have revealed to some special person whose virtues deserve to be highly esteemed, what other effect could here upon ensue, but the utter confusion of his Church, under pretence of being taught, led and guided by his spirit.'

It is of course at this point that Hooker has placed his finger on the problem. The problem, of course, settles on the perennial question of how Scripture is to be interpreted. And of course the magisterial Reformers recognised this problem. For they well understood the danger of individual exegetes or disparate groups (or indeed of General Synods drawn from only two provinces of the world wide Church) seeking to make a change in the ancient practise of the Church that has continued time out of mind.

Hooker articulates the danger as follows: 'when they and their Bibles were alone together whatever strange opinion entered their heads, their use was to think that the Holy Spirit taught it them.' With this understanding of Scripture and the way it should be interpreted, it is indeed very difficult to see how the proposed legislation could ever enhance the Church of England's proud claim to be part of the One Holy and Catholic and Apostolic Church. She cannot be One for she has become divided. She cannot be Catholic for she has overthrown the universal consensus of the Church. And she cannot be Apostolic for she has forsaken Apostolic teaching.

### What shall we do?

I hope that you can see from the above that for me the Ordinariate is not an attractive option. I say that out of no disrespect to those of you who think it may offer you and your people a solution, or out of any personal disrespect for Pope Benedict, whom I greatly admire. But, strange though it may seem, I cannot go over to the Roman Catholic Church. I say Roman Catholic and not Catholic for the simple reason that it seems to this Protestant member of the Church of England that the Church of Rome holds certain doctrines that are not Catholic.

So I increasingly find myself at odds with my own Church and soon to be made an outlaw within her. The evangelical reaction I think will be mixed. And that will be the problem. Some, as I have already suggested, will try to argue that it is a second order issue. Some will resign. Others will hang on and then leave for some kind of Independency. Still others will seek Episcopal Oversight and Ordination from other Bishops in Africa - most probably from the Church of England in South Africa. None of these seems attractive either. I shall wait and see and hope that out of the confusion and chaos some sort of *modus vivendi* will emerge. But one thing is certain. It will be very difficult for me to encourage my PCC to pay their quota. I do not in conscience think that I can do this. It would be quite wrong to give money to a "church" that is no longer either Protestant or Catholic. Let alone give money to an institution that no longer cares for or needs my ministry. For, as they used to say in the United States, there can not be taxation without representation. **ND**



# Peter has strengthened his brethren

**Mark Woodruff** takes a close look  
at the enduring significance of the Papal Visit

A quiet revolution has taken place. Even the *Tablet* headline proclaimed, “Four days that shook the UK.” The Holy Father was surprised too. He began intending to confront the “aggressive secularism” bent on dominating public life in this country for 13 years. But in his address to the bishops just before he departed, he said, “it has become clear to me how deep a thirst there is among the British people for the Good News”.

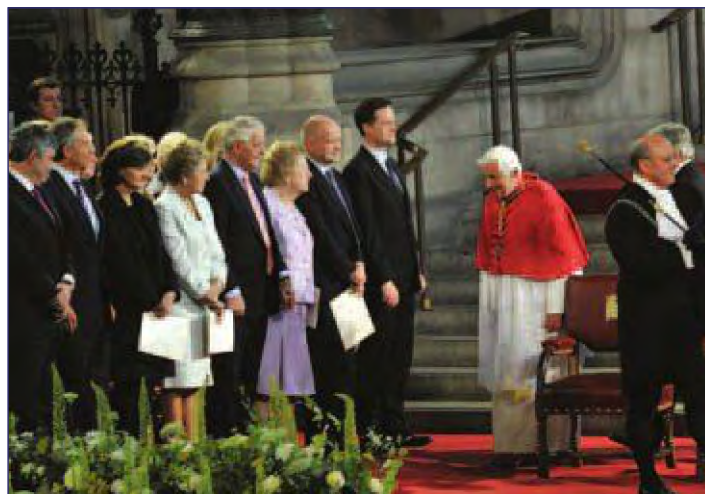
Once home, he observed how “the Christian heritage is still strong and also active in all strata of society” This apostolic journey confirmed a profound conviction in me: the old nations of Europe have a Christian soul.” From the Pope’s viewpoint, this visit was reconnaissance in advance of the defining objective of his pontificate – the struggle for the soul of Europe.

Speaking of our obscured Christian constitution, as much as from seeing us with him at prayer, he sees the vital importance of the evangelisation of culture. And, in the economic situation caused by the crisis of virtue in public life and commerce, he noted the shallowness beneath cultural and social assumptions in the West: they comprehensively fail to answer humanity’s deepest questions, or realise the aspirations that many sense but can hardly formulate. So he asked our bishops to make full use of the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelisation, expressly established to bring the gospel to societies that have forgotten how to be the disciples they instinctively want to be. Incidentally, the New Evangelisation is surely the true context in which to see *Anglicanorum Coetibus*.

There were six outstanding moments. First was the warmth of the Pope’s respect for the Queen. For nearly 60 years as Head of State she has borne consistent witness to Christ and the service to which he calls his followers. In the political sphere, she has maintained this virtually alone, as a succession of ministers have played down the Church, until the preposterous Hazel Blears could advance the lie in 2009, “thank God, we are a secular society.”

As a British Catholic, I felt proud that Pope Benedict recognised the fidelity of our monarchy to Christ for over 1000 years, and particularly the apostolate of our present Sovereign. Secondly, there was the sight of the First Minister of Scotland singing hymns at the top of his voice in Bellahouston Park. He later remarked that the visit was “a triumph of enthusiasm over cynicism.” So much for “We don’t do God, Tony”.

Third was the Pope’s riveting address to Parliament in Westminster Hall. While the culmination of the visit was the Beatification of Cardinal Newman, it is this event that will prove to be the most momentous. In just twenty minutes, he gently reset the terms of public discourse and enabled the



re-entry of religion into the British public square in a way that was well and truly off the cards even a week before. He has established a rationale for faith and reason, religion and society, to be in relation, dialogue and mutual influence. No one in Britain since Cardinal Hume could have done this, not even the Chief Rabbi or the Archbishop of Canterbury,

who has had to endure the sidelining manoeuvres of the last government’s spin doctors. It was a demanding speech, but it hit its mark.

In comparison, the addresses of Mr Speaker Bercow and Lord Speaker Hayman were positive, yet thin.

As many have been doing now for 13 years, they cited “the role of faith”.

But this language has become a cliché, useful for avoiding acknowledgement of anything but private belief. They cannot bring themselves to mention the “role of religion”, or “the role of Christianity”, let alone to name Christ and his Church. But, recalling St Thomas More and the now Blessed John Henry Newman, the Pope explained the centrality of the Christian revelation, and the indispensable relationship of faith and reason for shaping a just and trustworthy society, before prophetically going to stand on the spot on which St Thomas was consigned by the state to martyrdom for his adherence to the Church of God.

Fourth was the Prayer Vigil in Hyde Park. The widespread protests, well aimed exposés in the papers and embarrassing drama-documentaries on the box, eagerly anticipated by the news media, failed to materialise. The demonstrators did their worst but, instead of offering a sharp and reasoned critique, came across as prejudiced demagogues unconcerned with accuracy or allowing any voice to be heard but theirs. They ran out of things to say. Meanwhile, people made their own minds up about a civilised, intelligent and kind man of prayer. It is also dawning that, rather than covering up child abuse, Cardinal Ratzinger had insisted that all cases come to his own desk to ensure they were acted upon.

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**the Pope’s riveting address  
to Parliament in Westminster  
Hall will prove to be the most  
momentous event.**

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He described them unequivocally as “crimes,” signifying that all offenders must be referred to the civil authorities too. While he has been concerned that the accused have rights to due process and the presumption of innocence, he realised that the Catholic authorities appeared to be protecting the abusers and the public image of the Church. So he apologised for their lack of openness and compassion towards victims. No Pope before has expressed penitence like this and he should be respected for his act of reparation.

As it happened, on the Saturday 6,000 turned up to “Protest the Pope.” But 200,000 lined the streets to welcome him and 70,000 more were inside Hyde Park not for a rally, but to kneel in silent prayer with the Bishop of Rome at the heart of the most teeming of cities in the Western world.

Fifth was the tribute he paid to British Christianity and the fallen of the Battle of Britain, when it was left standing alone in Europe against the evil of Nazism, rescuing his own native land and very possibly the future of the Christian Church in Europe, including the freedom of the papacy itself and the life of a young aspirant for the priesthood named Joseph.

Sixth was the beatification of Cardinal Newman. In that mass, laden with Anglican patrimony as well as the paramount importance of the abiding truths presented in

Catholic dogma, a whole dislocation in English Christian life was eased back in place. A long history was corrected with the beatification of a man that is increasingly seen as the most eminent nineteenth century Christian writer, preacher and thinker, integrating both his early Anglican concern for Christian truth with the Cardinal and father of Vatican II. As the implications of this are realised the effects will go deep. Pope Benedict has almost silently set the course for a new ecumenism between Anglicans and Catholics - not dwelling on the past, but taking up a common quest in the truth about God and humanity for the re-evangelisation of old Europe.

Did these four days really shake Britain? 6,000 protested; 300,000 turned up on Saturday alone; 1 billion are said to have watched

worldwide. But in a country of 60 million, most were nowhere to be seen. Of course, millions were watching on their television and the web; but many were indifferent, content that modern Britain leaves them free to be atheist. So we should not get carried away with delight at initial success. Instead, we should look for lasting indications that something has lodged itself in Britain’s imagination and spirit. For the first time in a generation, it may just be that the Pope has given us the permission we were looking for to be Christian again. **ND**

## Pope Benedict has almost silently set the course for a new ecumenism between Anglicans and Catholics

**I**t helps sometimes to break the components of a Christian rule of life into simple categories. I am grateful to a friend for suggesting the following which he calls the five ‘S’s’. I have found it very helpful as I reflect on the pattern of my daily life and the use I make of my time and other gifts the Lord gives.

The first is **STABILITY**. This quality in life lies at the heart of the ‘religious’ or ‘monastic life’ but it also one to which every Christian should give close attention. It is very ‘counter cultural’ to resist change and to avoid ‘progress’. In contemporary mind-set ‘stability’ equals ‘forces of conservatism’. There is a wander lust abroad and a great instability in our communities and work place.

This is counter productive to life in Christ. We must therefore always question the value and motive of significant voluntary changes in our life. We learn most about ourselves and the world around us by staying put. It is important to question the ‘need for a change’ – is it to escape from problems of our own making? In the context of community life stability ensures that all relationships and situations must be dealt with – eventually.

## Ghostly Counsel Simple Spirituality

**Andy Hawes** is Warden of Edenham Regional Retreat House

The second is **SILENCE**. Again this is a rare commodity in most contemporary lifestyles. For some of us there is an almost physical dependence on background noise. Silence has always been and will always be the context for the most intimate encounter with the Divine.

This is because silence is also the best point of entry into our deepest self consciousness. Acknowledging that our environment is very rarely silent is a pure sense, it is important to cut out noise where and when one can.

The third is **SOLITUDE**. Here is a clear echo of Jesus’ own teaching about prayer. ‘Go into you own room and close the door and your Father who sees what is in secret will hear you.’ For many people there are many practical

obstacles to establishing a pattern of solitary alones with God – nevertheless it is an aspiration which has as its heart the ‘fact’ of God. The person who chooses to be alone with God is in the very action making a step of faith and opening up a conversation with the Divine.

The fourth is **SIMPLICITY** the Seventies’ mantra ‘live simply that others may simply live’ is a helpful starting point in feeling the weight of this advice. The Christian life style is one that pares everything down to ‘needs’ not ‘wants’ and includes everything from fasting to tithing, contraception to organic window boxes.

The fifth is **SCRIPTURE**. The Christian life must be one founded on the Word of God. Here the Christian ‘doth both suck and live’ to quote George Herbert. The scriptures open for us the mind of Christ and provide a light to our path and the food that is heavenly. A life that does not open itself to the light of revelation will surely perish.

As with most simple advice the five ‘S’s’ are challenging and require much thought and prayer in their application, but as a simple aide memoire or as ‘checklist’ for a rule of life they provide a sure and straightforward guide.



## HEARING THE WORD

# A saying in its time

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

**M**any folks who have never read him may be familiar, nonetheless, with the most famous mot of Lord Acton: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men . . ."

Although this pronouncement is frequently quoted, it is rarely analyzed, it seems to me, and even less often assessed. However, it warrants, by its popularity, at least some comment from time to time, and I propose here to make my brief contribution. Three headings, probably, will suffice.

First, when Acton made this comment—in the course of a 24-page letter to Bishop Creighton—the immediate context of the "power" was not secular but religious; Acton had in mind, explicitly and first of all, the Borgias, the Roman Inquisition, and other religious scandals. When he mentioned "the general wickedness of men in authority," he began with "Luther and Zwingli and Calvin and Cranmer and Knox." Only then did he go on to list Henry VIII, Philip II, and others.

It is difficult—futile, too, and hopeless—to understand Acton's observation apart from the way his conscience was strained to the limit by what he regarded as the major abuse of ecclesiastical power during his own lifetime: the declaration of Papal Infallibility in 1870. In several places in his correspondence, Acton complained bitterly of the way Pope Pius IX, to promote this teaching as a dogma, connived and forced the hand of the bishops at the First Vatican Council.

Second, if the deplorable attitude and behavior of Pope Pius IX did lie at the root of Acton's comment on corruption by power—as is arguably the case—it is not obvious he was right. I have read biographies of this particular pope, and my impression of him hardly includes "power." As to his opponents, yes: Cavour, Garibaldi, Victor Emmanuel II—these were men

of power and were arguably corrupted by it. Pius, however, that abject "prisoner of the Vatican," pouting and complaining to his fellow bishops—no, no, power is not the word that comes to mind.

Third, and consequent to the foregoing observation, it is my impression that weakness tends to corrupt—at least as much as power. It is more probable, for example, that a poor man will steal than a rich man. Lying may be common in the halls of government, but is it really less widespread in alleyways?

This experience allows of exceptions, of course, but in general—and especially when the power is derived from high office—men seldom increase their authority by abusing it, and they normally know this. Even when they don't, experience testifies that the powerful also prefer to be liked and admired; this preference may lay at least some restraint on them. Weak and vulnerable men, on the other hand, are less likely to be controlled this way.

Notoriety is a consideration here. If a man in public office abuses his authority, all the world can see it; all the world may comment and condemn. But consider the plight of those placed under that authority. They are powerless, and, being powerless, are vulnerable. Now when the powerless and the vulnerable are abused, they not infrequently turn to rebellion. And a rebel is just as readily corruptible as a tyrant.

In the Church, where rebellion is impossible, power may equally corrupt everybody. It must be evident, after all, that a powerful bishop is no more disposed to corruption than the person who anonymously maligns him. Is this, I wonder, what Acton had in mind?

Anyway, Acton's celebrated dictum—with which, in its original context, I am in sympathy—seems to lack something as a moral theorem. **ND**

## What Then Remains?

**N**owadays you can read stories of clergy administering Holy Communion to a dog, or advocating swearing as a means to evangelism or shoplifting as a 21st century way in which the poor can become blessed, and not turn a hair. But just occasionally you come across a news item that causes you to drop your 'Daily Wail' to leave a hand free to pinch yourself to prove you're not dreaming.

This happened to me the other day when reading that the Prayer Book Society has just appointed a Youth Advisor. Young people at the few remaining 8.00a.m. BCP services? 'Youth appeal' yes, but if more folk came to the BCP service which the Vicar thought he'd hidden from sight, he'd immediately make it a 7th Sunday in the month affair.

Worse still, the PBS, of all groups, 'getting with it', is further evidence that scarcely anything now remains of the Anglican patrimony, so that those hoping to travel on the Ordinariate Express, would have so little to carry that they could travel Ryanair without paying a supplement.

Is no tradition safe? Seemingly not, for the Bishop of Manchester has backed a campaign to persuade supermarkets to stock Easter Eggs, conveying a Gospel message as an alternative to eggs featuring the traditional Easter Bunny. 'Gospel messages'?

That's surely something for 'Prots' not Anglicans, particularly Catholic Anglicans. The Triduum in Tesco's; whatever next?

What's next is even more of a blow to traditional Catholic mores. The birth of the Society of St Wilfred and St Hilda. Already acronyms for it abound. SWISH, WASH and so on - a Scrabble players dream.

Really, Fathers. Acronyms are the territory of those innovators MOW and WATCH.

You wouldn't Adam and SSC've it.

Alan Edwards



# That muted welcome

**John Turnbull** shares his excitement, confusion and embarrassment as he watched the evening service with Pope Benedict at Westminster Abbey

**I**t goes to show you should never believe your own propaganda. The Romans may be right, we are happy to acknowledge, but we do it better; if they have the words, we have the choreography. Whatever you may say against the Church of England – and there is plenty you might say in criticism – we do worship better. This is almost part of our self-definition.

Or maybe we don't. We got our comeuppance on Friday evening, 17 September, when the Holy Father came to Westminster Abbey. It was an important occasion, and let us hope that the picture of Pope Benedict and Archbishop Rowan kneeling in prayer before the Shrine of St Edward the Confessor will remain long in our shared consciousness of prayer. I am more than happy to acknowledge that this is what mattered – the occasion, the meeting, the prayer. That will not be lost.

## Ponderous

But what a strangely muted, unconfident act of worship it was, stumbling in its nervous disorganization. Maybe the present Dean of Westminster is not very good at liturgy, maybe someone's dog died, maybe everyone in London knows the whys and wherefores, but watching the service in the provinces, it was...not disappointing, because nothing in the papal visit has been disappointing, but a touch embarrassing.

It was all so badly organized and ponderous. Of course, there were scores of visiting dignitaries to be catered for, and they inevitably restrain the freedom of the home crowd. (The star turn was surely that delightful woman in long flowing hair and dressed as a wiccan, who turned out to be a Methodist.) I was happy to see that the meeting with Dr Jane Hedges was entirely straightforward, with nothing of the shock horror predicted by the press beforehand. It was good to see a woman among the clerics – she was not acting as a priest – it was only a pity not to see any other women among the altar party in a supposedly liberal institution.

## Anglican patrimony

Ironic, perhaps. Recently we have been speaking much about Anglican patrimony in response to the Holy Father's generous offer of the Ordinariate. One of the first items that always comes to mind, and which features in any discussion, is Choral Evensong.

It is true, this was not Evensong, it was 'A Service of Evening Prayer,' but it was made to look suspiciously like it; but here was the author of this idea of patrimony present at the epitome of what Anglicans have to offer the Church

Catholic; and we fluffed it.

That curious bit at the beginning, when they all had to stand around at the back of the abbey, like parents and visitors to a primary school, listening to the children perform their musical piece. It did not seem entirely polite when welcoming an 83-year-old pilgrim.

## Sense of awkwardness

Why am I going on about all this? Any event can be criticized if one tears it apart detail by detail. To which I would respond, that I did not feel the same when watching the other services and meetings of the visit. And nor do I think it was about the details.

It was that strange, troubling sense of awkwardness and defensiveness; even a lack of generosity. Praise the Lord for Archbishop John Sentamu, who broke protocol and seemed

to flummox those around him by going forward for a final private word with Benedict, before he got into the limousine at the end. I don't know what he said, but I thanked him for saying it.

No, the reason I was so struck by that service was the grandeur and importance of the occasion (which will not be lost) set against its utterly unexpected failure of

organization. It was about us. We believed we could show anyone how to do worship. And when it came to it, we couldn't. I am not blaming the Dean or Westminster Abbey, I am saying this was an accurate mirror of the Church of England as a whole, myself included.

## Humility and gratitude

Why did Dr Rowan Williams look so miserably unhappy all the way through? I don't know – though he has certainly many burdens and troubles to bear as leader of the Anglican Communion. But I asked myself, 'Is that how I look, as a member of this church?' and the answer has to be, 'Surely, yes.'

We are in crisis. When attacked by outsiders, we may close ranks, juggle the statistics and insist that all is well. But here was a holy friend, come to greet us, and of course we were happy – and the applause was genuine – but somehow we couldn't get our act together.

One chaotic service is not much of a symptom, but I feel humbler for the Holy Father's visit, and I do not now think I shall be referring to choreography as part of our shared inheritance. I am deeply grateful for all the Anglican inheritance, but I am also deeply grateful that Pope Benedict has offered the hand of friendship and welcome in these uncertain times. **ND**

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**why did Dr Rowan Williams look so miserably unhappy all the way through? I don't know – though he has certainly many burdens and troubles to bear as leader of the Anglican Communion**

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# faith of our fathers

**Arthur Middleton** on seeing beyond the real and tragic present, and the value of immersion in tradition

**O**n the flyleaf of a modern translation of *On the Incarnation* it says, 'when it looked as if all the civilized world was slipping back from Christianity into the religion of Arius, into one of those 'sensible' synthetic religions which are so strongly recommended to-day and which then, as now, included among their devotees many highly cultivated clergymen, the glory of St Athanasius is that he did not move with the times; it is his reward that he now remains when those times, like all others, have passed away.'

## 'Reading old books'

The introduction by C.S. Lewis stresses the importance, in an age obsessed with trendiness, of 'reading old books.' He advised his English students to keep in touch with the classics, 'the bloodstream of our culture,' by reading formative original texts, alternating between old and new books. For Lewis this is more important when reading theological books.

Coming late to a discussion results in missing the drift of what is being said because of being absent from the conversation's early stages. In thinking about faith 'the only safety is to have a

standard of plain, central Christianity which puts the controversies of the moment in their proper perspective.' This standard can be acquired only from the old books. 'With awareness of the long theological tradition, the reader has a chance, at least, of seeing beyond the real and tragic present divisions and confusions within the Christian family to 'something positive, self-consistent, and inexhaustible,' running through every age, something that expresses for us a still more fundamental unity in faith and moral vision.'

Brian Daley SJ, in "Old Books and Contemporary Faith – the Bible Tradition and the Renewal of Theology" [*Ancient Faith for the Church's Future*], shows that Scripture and the theological interpretations of the early Church constitute a necessary basis for the renewal of theology and the Church. He argues that for the Fathers it is only within a 'worshipping, discerning, interpreting, preaching church that Scripture becomes Scripture – is received as a canon and generates the rule of faith'; hence the importance of reading the theology of the Church Fathers.

Athanasius did not approach the Bible as a naked text to be interpreted

by autonomous individuals. The lens through which the Fathers read the Scripture was broader and deeper than issues of background, grammar and authorial intent. They employed the Church's rule of faith and tradition as interpretive tools to help them expose the fractures in the Arian model of Christ. Athanasius used the theology and practices of the Church in worship to criticize Arius' refusal to acknowledge Christ as God. If Athanasius worshipped Christ as God, daily praying to Christ, feeding on Christ in the Eucharist like many Arian Christians, how could Arius be correct in his reading of Scripture? The communal practices of the Church in worship, habits and discipline were grounded on the apostolic testimony and practices contained in Scripture and these guided its interpretation.

## Combating distortions

Irenaeus, Tertullian, Augustine and Vincent of Lérins affirmed and utilized authoritative summaries of the Apostles' teaching that had shaped and guided the Church across the years as it interpreted the meaning of the Bible's apostolic testimony. They aided them in combating distorted and revisionist views of the Christian faith. Doctrine and Scripture belong together because there can be no disjunction between Bible and Church since the true Church of Christ teaches the Gospel, since the Bible is the sacred and canonical witness to the Gospel. Therefore, any church claiming apostolic legitimacy must assert that her public doctrine is in accord with the content of Scripture.

Larger than summaries such as the *Rule of Faith* is the Church's great tradition. Tradition is a way of being educated, trained and formed in the virtues necessary for Christian life and good theologizing.

In ancient Christianity orthodoxy and orthopraxy are inseparable. Ecclesial practices encountered each week, often in the context of worship, informed how the Fathers thought about the Gospel. To practise the way of Jesus in the postmodern world entails a lengthy apprenticeship to Jesus under the tutelage of those who have known him well. Immersion in tradition is the presupposition for excellence and originality. It is the way of artists who first learn by copying someone else's style. Imitation is the way to excellence and originality. **ND**



"... I can assure you, I have no axe to grind..."



# God and the Beeb

**Digby Anderson** argues that quality, not quantity, is the main problem in religious broadcasting, but is media culture so far removed from true religion that most journalists can no longer understand it?

Senior figures in the Church of England want the BBC to have a senior figure of its own committed to extensive and deep religious coverage. The implied complaint is not that the current religious broadcasting is biased against religion but that its coverage is inadequate.

Religion does not get a fair share of airtime. Some Forward in Faith members might not complain about the quantity of time but the quality of comment. Some might consider the BBC biased against their case. I think the problem is more profound than either bias or inadequate coverage. I don't think BBC religious journalists are able to understand religion any more.

## A new ideology

Simply, the broadcasters' culture is so far removed from that of true religion that it can't handle it without converting it into something it can understand, such as sexual discrimination or church politics. For instance, they treat a church as if it were the creation of public opinion or the current state of reason, rather like a modern political party in a democracy.

They cannot understand that the church is God's foundation, his legacy given on his last night on earth. Men are not at liberty to tinker with it to suit popular demand or the wisdom of contemporary culture.

It's not only the BBC. Over the last two decades *The Times* has acquired a new ideology which judges things by how rationalist and modern they are. The traditional priesthood, sexual discipline, tradition and the Sovereign Pontiff are obstinately unmodern. The *Daily Telegraph* is rather different. While conservative, it is increasingly feminized and soppy, putting emotivation and sentimentality where once moral and religious thinking prevailed. This ideology thinks Catholic religion is unfair on women.

This explains the two charges against Forward in Faith: it has failed to move on and incorporate equality of opportunity and it is harsh and unfair.

## The 'package deal'

This cultural divide between media and traditional Christian culture is not new. But as the media culture has acquired more and more causes so the gap has widened. In his autobiography, *The Missing Will*, Michael Wharton, who worked for both the BBC after the war and later

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they treat a church as if  
it were the creation of  
public opinion or the  
current state of reason

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the *Telegraph* (writing the Peter Simple column in the latter), describes the domination of the 'liberal consensus' or 'package deal'. The deal included internationalism, faith in the United Nations, egalitarianism, pacifism, hatred of the past and 'a strange kind of inverted patriotism, an instinctive feeling that in any dispute our country must always be in the wrong. At its silliest [it] involved a belief in human perfectability and paradise on earth.'

But Wharton's keenest observation about those who accepted the package was this: these 'Hampstead thinkers simply did not believe that a person who seemed intelligent and educated could have opinions different from their own.' That is, they found such opinions, and those who held them, unbelievable.

## Losing our abilities

Since the late Forties, about which he was writing, we could add to the package obsessive anti-racism, anti-homophobia, environmentalism at the expense of humanism, feminism and scientism. The problem gets

worse but its nature is the same. The package people cannot understand religion. Once, for instance in medieval Europe, there was a popular understanding of religion. What was then contemporary popular culture was based on religion. That popular culture is currently derided as superstitious. No doubt it included doctrinal misunderstandings but these people knew what religion was.

The sociologist Peter Berger has pointed out that the humblest peasant went to bed in Christian fear of death. This is a fear most of us are incapable of. We have lost the ability to understand. Cultures gain new abilities as time goes on. We know much more than medieval peasants did about some things. But we have lost some abilities.

African cultures, in some respects primitive, are aghast at modern western culture's lack of sense of family. While we, for instance, are highly literate, we have lost the ability to remember culture orally. And we are losing the ability to understand, to appreciate religion.

## Heading for disaster

Those, such as the Hampstead thinkers, the liberal consensualists, the BBC and other media who have lost it most, will not be taught it again by discussing the matter. The call for more airtime to debate religion will do no good at all. 'Debate' is itself one of the new gods of the consensus.

Experience suggests that one way an individual, having lost religious sensibility, starts to re-acquire it is generally after some personal loss or disaster. It is not an infallible prescription but the lives of saints and poets give many hopeful examples. I suppose what works for the individual might work for a whole culture. Fortunately the liberal 'civilization' is heading towards such a disaster. We must hope it is truly awful and imminent. **ND**

# devotional

## *Cloud of Unknowing* Clifton Wolters

**W**e must pray in the height, depth, length, and breadth of our spirits. Not in many words, but in a little word of one syllable. What shall this word be? Surely such a word as is suited to the nature of prayer itself. And what word is that?

First let us see what prayer is in itself, and then we shall know more clearly what word will best suit its nature.

In itself prayer is nothing else than a devout setting of our will in the direction of God in order to get good, and remove evil. Since all evil is summed up in sin, considered casually or essentially, when we pray with intention for the removing of evil, we should neither say, think, nor mean any more than this little word 'sin'.

And if we pray with intention for the acquiring of goodness, let us pray, in word or thought or desire, no other word than 'God.' For in God is all good, for he is its beginning and its being. Do not be surprised then that I set these words before all others.

If I could find any shorter words which would sum up fully the thought of good or evil as these words do, or if I had been led by God to take some other words, then I would have


used those and left these. And that is my advice for you too.

But don't study these words, for you will never achieve your object so, or come to contemplation; it is never attained by study, but only by grace. Take no other words for your prayer, despite all I have said, than those that God leads you to use. Yet if God does lead you to these, my advice is not to let them go, that is, if you are using words at all in your prayer: not otherwise.

They are very short words. But though shortness of prayer is greatly to be recommended here, it does not mean that the frequency of prayer is to be lessened. For as I have said, it is prayed in the length of one's spirit, so that it never stops until such time as it has fully attained what it longs for.

We can turn to our terrified man or woman for an example. They never stop crying their little words, 'Help!' or 'Fire!' till such time as they have got all the help they need in their trouble.

*From: The Cloud of Unknowing*  
Clifton Wolters

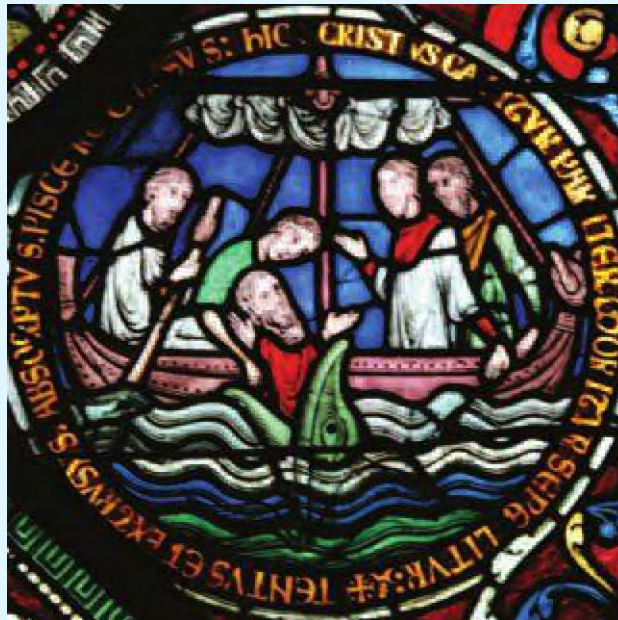
(Penguin, 1971, pp. 98-9) 

## sacred vision

### Jonah, Canterbury Cathedral

**T**he roundel of Jonah, probably dating from around 1200, is one of four surrounding a panel of the Resurrection at the centre of what has come to be known as the Redemption Window in the Corona. Some of the panels are the work of the nineteenth century restorer Austin.

The Jonah panel is probably by a Flemish craftsman, three of whom have been identified at work on the window (whose iconographical scheme must, nevertheless, have been the work of one man, probably a canon of the cathedral). Jonah's three days and nights in the belly of the whale was a type of the Resurrection which had scriptural, indeed dominical, authority (Matt. 12:19), and was common throughout the middle ages. Here we see the moment when the sailors, having identified Jonah as the cause of the tempest, and with his encouragement, cast him overboard. The whale is there to receive him (obedient thereby to the divine providence) and



Jonah enters it with a look of pious resignation.

The style of the corona windows has been compared to that of a number of contemporary manuscripts; but there is no need to see them as imitative or derivative. The use of colour and the overall design shows a mastery of the stained glass medium which owes nothing to painters either of frescoes or of books. The windows have a luminosity and a symphonic use of colour which singles them out as masterpieces of their genre. Each roundel is a balanced composition in

itself, with telling detail. The whole is an equally balanced composition of discrete elements, binding the geometrical parts into an organic whole.

The typological windows in the ambulatory and the Corona are the glories of the Cathedral and among the most significant achievements in the whole of European stained glass.

*Mark Stephens*



# One of Three?

Robin Jones and John Caster reflect on the Southern Sacred Synod

*He holds him with his glittering eye-  
The Wedding-Guest stood still,  
And listens like a three years' child:  
The Mariner hath his will.*

As the Catholic clergy of the Southern Province of the Church of England gathered on the 24th of September, there were no doubt many questions about our near and long-term future. Where will future ministry exist for Anglo-Catholic clergy?

Like the wedding guest in Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner (referenced by Fr Jonathan Baker in his address to the Synod), many of those present at the Synod approached the tale which would unfold with a certain level of trepidation. In the two sessions, it could be argued that many left with more questions than with which they had arrived.

*And now the storm-blast came, and he  
Was tyrannous and strong:  
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,  
And chased us south along.*

Fr Baker set the tone by describing, from an insider's perspective, the present situation for Anglo-Catholics as a result of the actions of the General Synod. Considering the July Synod in light of the recent Papal visit, Fr Baker drew on the Pope's addresses and argued that Anglo-Catholicism remains where the Church is; it is simply others who have moved. Benedict's call to a fidelity to the word of God which was 'free of intellectual conformism' and a deeper devotion to the Eucharist in 'sacramental and liturgical life' was called for. This was echoed in the Archbishop of Canterbury's statement that 'Bishops are servants of the unity of Christ's people.'

This understanding not only presents challenges in our present situation, but also focuses us on our priorities for a positive outcome. On the other hand, the synodical process had provided a negative contrast. What Fr Baker described as a 'Blitzkrieg' of amendments in the revision committee and the eventual rejection of the Archbishop's amendment in the July synod gave no reason to believe that the legislation would be revised or substantially altered.

Aiden Hargreaves-Smith spoke from a lay perspective on the current situation. He was keen to point out that clergy should be aware that they are 'loved and supported' and that laity shared in a process of 'mutual responsibility'. He reminded those present that laity need active support and encouragement. Urging those present to remember that no one has 'a monopoly' on the Catholic faith, he warned that precipitated action might not be the best way forward in a context of doom and gloom. He also pressed the importance of the current synod elections.

The Bishops of Ebbsfleet, Richborough, and Fulham spoke of the Ordinariate and the potential this model could hold for Anglo-Catholics. Andrew Burnham's, referencing his oft quoted 'Rita' (Rome is the answer), considered the Ordinariate as a fulfilment of the Catholic societies' desire for corporate reunion. He opined that the eventual outcome

for the Church of England was that of a "branch [which] would wither", whereas the Ordinariate had been devised in conjunction with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He could not see a possibility of any form of independent jurisdiction in the CofE after numerous rejections. Keith Newton acknowledged that there were many 'unanswered questions' and that, in reality, the ordinariate was 'not for all of you - it may not be for most of you.' Though unable to provide exact details about timescales, clergy housing and stipends, he was emphatic in his belief that these issues would be dealt with, not least of all because the Catholic Churches authorities would not wish to be placed in the position of having failed people. He urged for channels of 'communication and affection' to be kept open. John Broadhurst spoke of Forward in Faith's original vision for 'unity and truth' and the desire for jurisdiction and freedom in a form which takes our 'culture, history, and people' seriously, which he argued would be best served in an Ordinariate.

*Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed  
The lighthouse top I see?  
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?  
Is this mine own country?*

The Ordinariate was not the only model for future ministry presented, and, indeed, the second proposal presented was obviously the reason for this Synod. Bishop Mark Sowerby introduced the alternative as the Missionary Society of St Wilfred and St Hilda, which aims to 'organise a structure inside the Church of England.' This model had been revealed the previous day at the Northern Synod. There was little detail beyond which Bishops had given their support at this point, with the intention of showing the Church of England that there remained thousands of laity and clergy opposed to the current innovations.

Fr David Clues also spoke in favour of such a model talking of the history and context of his parish in Willesden. He pointed to the generations of faithful laity and clergy who, despite numerous attempts, recent and past, to keep the Catholic faith alive and active. Such a society model had the potential to allow this unbroken link to continue.

During the two sessions of this Synod, it was clear that there exists enthusiasm for one option or the other, but there are also many who have yet to discern where their future ministry lies. To be fair, very much was discussed about the practicalities for clergy without a great deal of information given to possible modes of mission and evangelisation to the respective flocks. As John Broadhurst reminded the assembly, "You can't join something that doesn't exist." Possibilities have been presented, and those affected will need to see details and continue to practice patience and charity with their brethren. Nevertheless, there are rumours of viability and those who may have felt themselves without a future may see openings of hope. The participants, unlike the wedding guest, had no reason to be sadder, even if they left not much wiser. **ND**

# Retrospective

In a speech at the 2010 National Assembly  
**Geoffrey Kirk** looked back on the events of the last thirty years

I was instructed by Stephen Parkinson, who combines, as I am sure you know, on these occasions the roles of Goebels, Beria and Svengali, to be funny. I am not sure I can discharge my brief. The last twenty-five years, during which many of us have been seeking to resist the increasing liberalisation of the Church of England and in particular the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate have not, I think you will agree, been a barrel of laughs. They have had their moments – but most of those have been on the bizarre side of humorous.

I intend, instead, so far as in me lies, to tell it as it is – or rather as it has been. We are as they say nowadays, in a new place. We owe it to ourselves to recount as accurately as maybe, how we got here.

## In the beginning

The story begins with Cost of Conscience, which came to birth in my Vicarage in South London just over twenty-five years ago. The rationale was simple: that the battle was too serious to be left to a bunch of Synodical activists. We needed to mobilize the ordinary parish clergy. And from a series of shoe boxes on the floor of my dining room – these were the days when even computer buffs had only a small Amstrad – a list was made. It was not the only list. Graham Leonard set about his own, because, after all, he was a Bishop. But it was the only list that got clergy out of their parishes to sizeable meetings which gained press and synodical attention. In Church House Westminster, before the vote, we had a thousand two hundred clergy.

In a phrase which was taken up in unexpected places – Sweden and the United States, for example – Cost of Conscience proposed Alternative Episcopal Oversight. And we proposed a course of joint action if it was not forthcoming. That included the intention, in a phrase to

be repeated time and again later, to take it, if it was not given. A group of retired bishops was convened who were prepared to undertake irregular consecrations and a venue in Scotland booked for the event. Now here's a joke of sorts, especially if you're listening John Hind. The meeting took place in Chichester.

## Three limiting factors

But about this time, and especially with the passage of the legislation to see women ordained, three enduring features of the campaign became clear.

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**We rattled our sabres more than once; but the sabres themselves remained resolutely in the scabbard. And that did not go unnoticed.**

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The first was the singular inability of the constituency to deliver on its rhetoric. Not only did we fail to take what was not given; but we failed to use even the less radical weapons available to us. We talked about withdrawing quota payments, but could not even agree to pay them through a central agency. We rattled our sabres more than once; but the sabres themselves remained resolutely in the scabbard. And that did not go unnoticed.

The second feature was the total inability of the bishops of the Church of England to wrap their minds around any ecclesial structure other than geographical mono-episcopacy. A meeting between representatives of Cost of Conscience and of the House of Bishops in 1990 merely illustrates what has been an enduring problem. Three reactions were evident at that meeting. The Bishop of Guildford (then Michael Adie) was fluent and belligerent. The Bishop of Winchester (then Colin James) was benign but

puzzled. And the Bishop of Lincoln (then Bob Hardy) fell asleep and had to be awakened by his colleagues. As Fr Jonathan Baker told the recent Sacred Synod, things have not changed much since then.

The third feature was the re-emergence of a deep and atavistic anti-Romanism, not only among our opponents but amongst ourselves, even, I might add, among those with an apparently impeccable ecumenical pedigree – the old FOAGies as one might say. There were bitter recriminations about those who took the Roman option in 1993 – and there are antagonisms still, which allow others to think they can divide and rule. Watch this space.

## After the big event

Jesus promised the Kingdom (as the liberals used to say) and what we got was the Catholic Church. Cost of Conscience promised Alternative Episcopal Oversight and what we got was Flying Bishops and Forward in Faith.

Much has been said about the role of the PEVs. They have been an heroic bunch pioneering new ways of being bishop, and forging for us an ecclesial identity against all the odds. But something needs to be said also about Forward in Faith, which formed the constituency in the dark days of 1993 and sustains it still, nascent societies of Northern Saints notwithstanding. That is, in my view, largely the result of three things: the democratic and representative structures which were set up – largely on the initiative of John Broadhurst, whose vision these assemblies were; the regular publications, New Directions, Forward Plus and the Forward pew sheet, which were my enthusiasm; and the establishment of an efficient central office and administration which we owe for the most part to Stephen Parkinson.

Undergirding all this – and giving a theological as well as a pragmatic rationale for the work of the Flying Bishops – was the Forward in Faith Statement on Communion. It was not popular to begin with, particularly among the soi-disant Catholic Bishops, but it has remained an indispensable marker, delineating territory quite as effectively as the geographical



boundaries deemed so important by our opponents.

The statement was criticised as unprecedented and untheological. I remember a meeting with Geoffrey Rowell (then I think Bishop of Basingstoke) and the Chairman of the House of Bishops Theological Group, then Alec Graham. The grouse was our use of a novel and unfamiliar term: 'alternate'. What did it mean and what precedent was there for such a notion. I naturally tried to be helpful. I innocently wondered aloud if a translation into Latin would help them. It seemed to me that *Vicarius* had the solid ring of antiquity and a familiarity among Anglicans which could hardly be denied.

Will the Society of SS. Wilfrid and Hilda generate a statement on Communion of its own, one wonders, with Geoffrey lending a helping hand? The advent of women bishops will make such a statement more, not less relevant or necessary.

### Getting things wrong

Of course we got some things wrong, resoundingly wrong, as it turns out. And it is as well to be honest about that as well.

The first mistake was to participate in the synodical debates at all. Of course, in 1991, when all the number crunchers were predicting that the proposed legislation would fall at the final hurdle, the temptation to see things through on the floor of the Synod was almost irresistible. What a triumph to be able to go down to posterity as part of the team which saved the Church of England from itself! So no one noticed, it seems, that the best that could be hoped for was to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. The argument which alone united opposition in those years before the vote was the proposition that the Church of England – two deracinated provinces of the Western Church – had no authority to make the change. The Pope Himself (in those days John Paul II) was later to deny that even he and the Roman Magisterium had authority in the matter. But by participating in the debate (rather than absenting themselves or abstaining) the Catholic Group tacitly conceded to the Synod precisely the authority which it formally denied, and so paved

the way for the legislation which is now in preparation and which will render the 1992 vote conclusive and irreversible.

The second big mistake was the enthusiasm with which we embraced the spurious doctrine of reception. Reception seemed at first sight like a gift: to embrace it obliged us to nothing (we did not, on the strength of it, have to concede anything about the authenticity or validity of the orders purportedly conferred on women). Our opponents, on the contrary, were obliged to admit what they coyly described as 'a degree of provisionality'. So far so good. But we would have done well to have read the small print in advance.

That 'degree of provisionality' sounded the death knell of the Catholicity of the Church of England, for it undermined the Church's ability

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### That 'degree of provisionality' undermined the Church's ability to guarantee the authenticity of its own sacraments.

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to guarantee the authenticity of its own sacraments. Instead of being the vehicle of sacramental assurance, the CofE had wilfully become an arena of doubt. The best it could say of the orders to which it was admitting women was that at some future unspecified time it might know what they were. Now there's a joke, if ever there was one. But there is more.

So-called Catholic bishops, embracing this curious proposition, actually licensed to the cure of souls 'which is mine and thine' (or rather 'theirs and theirs') priests the validity of whose orders they themselves privately denied, and about which the Church itself was declaredly in two minds.

It was not, on reflection, one of the more glorious moments of the Catholic Revival. And we should have recognized that at the time.

### The nature of the case

The third mistake was, quite simply, to assume that we were engaged in

a theological argument with those who were theologically responsible and responsive. Time and again, in debates in the Synod (fruitless as they were destined to be) and latterly in depositions to committees and commissions (not least among them *Consecrated Women?*), we had the best of the argument. But to no avail. We seemed blinded to the truth which was unmistakably emerging: that women's ordination is not a conclusion drawn from scripture, or even deduced from natural theology, but an ethical *a priori* assertion which can brook no denial or contradiction. To biblical exegesis and rational argument the response was name-calling and abuse. I am glad that my own mother did not live to hear me traduced in, of all places, the *New Yorker* magazine, as an 'unrepentant misogynist'. But we have all been tarred with the same brush - unfounded accusations have been sprayed around ungroundedly unattributably, like graffiti on a wall. We should have seen what we were up against sooner than we did.

But here we are now, with little to show for our efforts and impending legislation which looks set to deny us even those provisions which we had carved out for ourselves. Dare I, who shared in all the errors and can point them out only with the grace of hindsight, give any guidance to my successor as Secretary of Forward in Faith?

### What next?

I would say only this: that we were not wrong in one thing. A Code of Practice will not do, and there can be no honourable place in Forward in Faith for those who will make do with it. There is something of a paradox, a contradiction in terms even, in being a catholic party within a church. (How can the Catholic whole be part of something else?) But one thing I know: that a Catholic party cannot subsist at all on the mere sufferance of others. It needs what Forward in Faith has always striven for – an ecclesial dignity and integrity which is properly its own. Whether that is achievable in the Church of England post women bishops remains to be seen. I shall probably not see it myself – or if I do, it will be from another communion and on another continent. **ND**