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Where authority lies

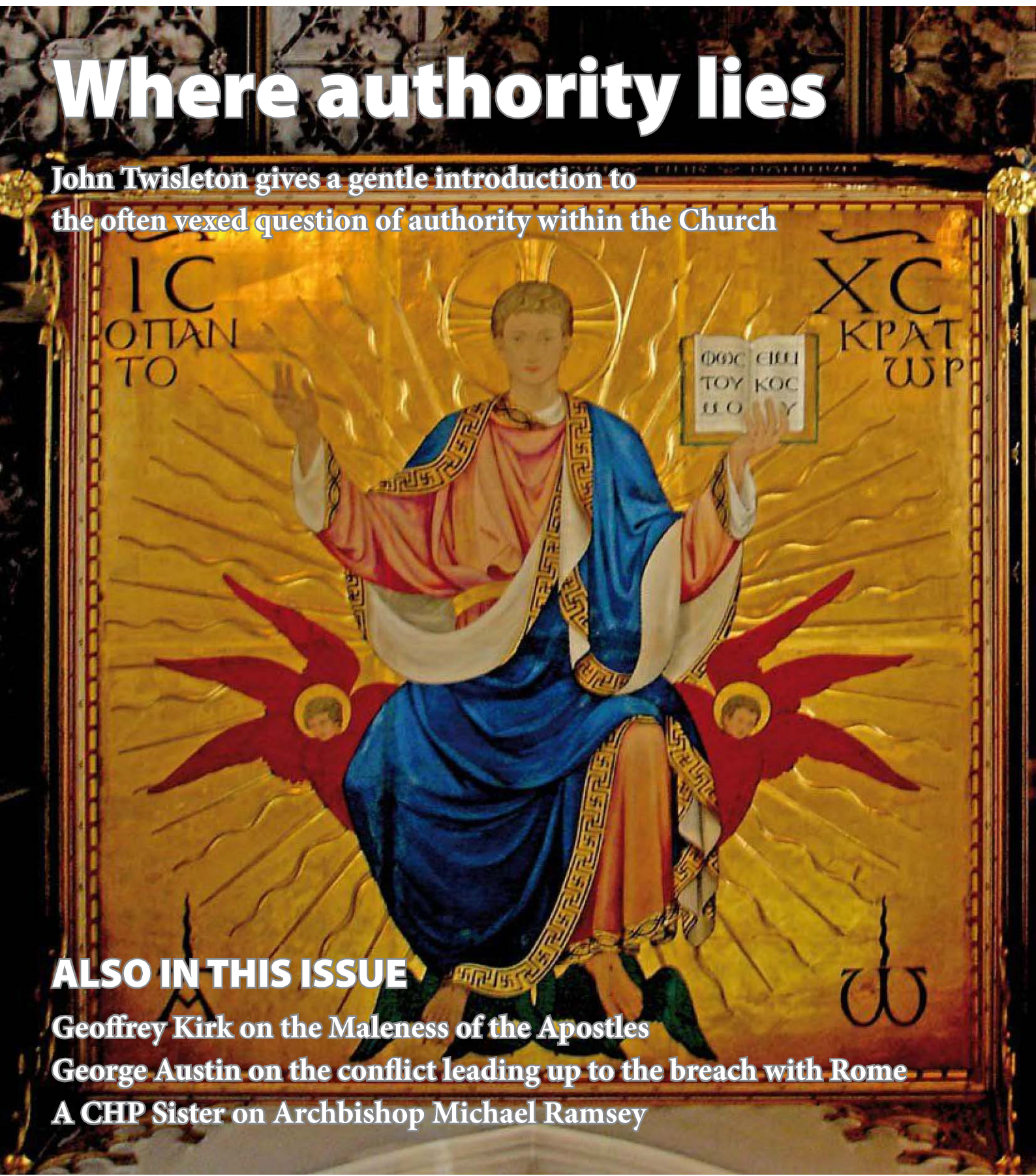
John Twisleton gives a gentle introduction to the often vexed question of authority within the Church

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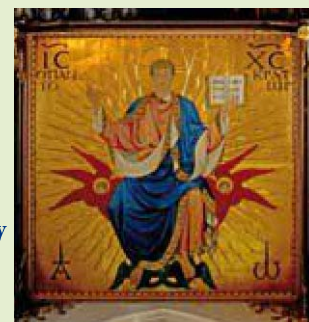
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There have been repeated complaints reaching the Forward in Faith Office from the dioceses that since the publication of 'Consecrated Women?' nothing has happened. The 'phoney war', as some have denominated it – waiting upon the decisions of the General Synod and the Manchester Group – has sapped our energy and undermined our resolve. Having outlined our proposals for an additional province, we have been seen to sit on our hands. But no longer.

The draft legislation in Wales is a call to arms, not only for members of Credo Cymru - Forward in Faith Wales, but for the whole constituency in both Churches. The passage of that legislation, unamended or inadequately amended, would put an end to any pretence at an open period of reception, and reduce conscientious objection to the ordination of women to a theologumenon dependent for its continued existence on the good will of individual bishops.

The Archbishop of Wales, in his paper accompanying the Draft Bill, asserted that the Province was too small to sustain the sort of internal arrangements set out by Credo Cymru. It was a strange argument.

Strange because to many the opposite might seem to be the case – the intimacy and informality of a small province would surely render such provisions *easier* to set up and operate. Strange because size is surely an argument against taking any action at all. How is it that such a small body, scarcely the size of two middling English dioceses, should arrogate to itself the authority to alter the ministry it has received from the Universal Church?

Forward in Faith at its recent Assembly committed itself to wholehearted and unstinting support for Credo Cymru in its fight to secure full and adequate provision. Such a fight, involving as it may well do, recourse to the civil courts and judicial review of the legislation, could be protracted and costly. But it is clear to us that, with the proposed Welsh bill, the 'phoney war' is at an end. We are engaged with an enemy which is clearly and avowedly bent on our extinction. That we cannot and will not permit, here or over the border.

What is the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting and why should anyone take notice of its opinions? In the frenzied attempt to invent an ecclesiology for the Anglican Communion new entities spring up almost unnoticed and are accorded an instant authority.

It is, of course, for the Primates to decide

whether or not the undertakings given by The Episcopal Church's House of Bishops satisfy the demands of the Dar-es-Salaam Communique - and mischievous to make public the opinions of any other body, which can only be advisory and ought to be confidential.

It is now urgent that the Primates meet and evaluate the TEC response. They can of course, do so only if they place the *words* of the House of Bishops in the full context of their *actions*, which speak louder.

Is there any sense in which TEC has repented its past actions or undertaken not to repeat them? The answer to that question must be NO. The *fast* which Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori has enjoined is merely a preparation for the self-indulgent feast which will surely follow it.



Unanimity is rare among Anglicans. Not so with the Annual Assembly of Forward in Faith. There resolutions are generally passed nem.con., and agreement is the order of the day. The fourteenth Annual Assembly (October 19-20) was no exception. Motions were presented and passed which addressed both the predicament of traditionalists in the wider church and the democratic structures and organisation of Forward in Faith at home.

Domestically the emphasis was on catechesis and on the fostering of vocations, both to the religious life and to the priesthood. It is here that the future of the constituency lies. The Mission Statement of Forward in Faith speaks of structures which will sustain in the faith our children and grandchildren. Work with young people and ordinands is therefore of the essence.

We are often derided as a backward looking single issue organisation which is fixated on a matter which was settled in 1992. But as was repeated time and again by different speakers at this year's Assembly, our eyes are firmly fixed on the future: a future which many seek to deny us.

We know, too, that women's ordination is merely the presenting issue of a wider agenda which has already done irreparable damage to catholic ecumenism and is busily undermining the unity of the Anglican Communion.

The Assembly spelled out once again the positive agenda of FiF. We are *for* Apostolic Order, the moral and ethical consensus of Catholic Christendom, the authority of scripture, and the unity of the Church. Those who are seeking to marginalise us in the Church of England have good reason for doing so, for they have destroyed or are seeking to destroy all those things. **ND**



Where authority lies

John Twisleton gives a gentle introduction to the often vexed question of authority within the Church of Christ

among
Anglicans
Scripture,
creeds,
sacraments
and
episcopacy
make
up
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authoritative
'quadrilateral'

By what authority do Christians believe? To answer 'God in Christ' is sufficient at one level because the Christian faith is kept going by its Author disclosed to people through encounter with Jesus. Christianity though is more than the one-to-one encounter of individuals with God. 'We are the body of Christ,' St Paul says, 'by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body' [1 Cor. 12.12–13]. The faith of Christians is therefore sustained within a body formed and authorized by God. This means Christians exist in a community promised authoritative guidance in its task of bringing the whole world to the praise and service of God.

Where is this authority? It lies in the whole body of Christians and their consensus of faith assisted by 'the Spirit of truth...who leads into all truth' [John 16.13] and by the promise of Christ 'that the gates of Hades will not prevail against [his church]' (Matt. 16.18). In the Acts of the Apostles the first church council authorized 'what seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to [the apostles and elders]' [15.28]. The apostles and elders had received authority from their Lord after his resurrection. 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you... Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven' [John 20.21–23].

In the course of time a three-fold order of bishops, priests and deacons came to serve the essential ministries of preaching, teaching, pastoral care and celebration of the sacraments. To this day ordained ministers carry authority to articulate the faith of the Church as a whole from one generation to another. They do so with regard to Scripture and its interpretation by teachers of the Christian faith throughout the centuries.

Authority in Christianity lies with the individual Christian as, for example, in Christ's authorization of individual believers to pray, witness, heal and deliver from evil. Whenever there is a disputed issue of faith or order it is the building up of a common view, or consensus, from individuals in dialogue, under the leadership of the ordained that leads to an authoritative settlement. In ordination services there is much stress on the responsibility of those ordained to hold their congregations to the Christian consensus of faith and to challenge false teaching with authority.

As they do so their own adherence in faith and morals to Christian teaching is a key requirement much underlined in the New Testament. 'If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished on words of the faith and of the sound teaching that you have followed' [1 Tim. 4.6].

So where is this consensus to be found? The Scriptures, creeds and early church councils upholding the Trinity and the two natures of Christ are recognized across major denominations as the authoritative basis of Christian faith. This is the basis from which the contemporary teaching office and the faith and rea-

soning of the people of God as a whole are exercised.

Different denominations give different degrees of authority to the Bible, to Christian tradition, to bishops or popes, and to inspired reasoning. Within Eastern Orthodoxy the liturgy, part of Christian tradition, holds particular authority. Among Roman Catholics the successor of St Peter is held to possess a charism when he acts with Catholic bishops to formulate the truth of Christian revelation. Among Anglicans Scripture, creeds, sacraments and episcopacy make up an authoritative 'quadrilateral'.

Christianity struggles across all denominations to exercise authority appropriately so as to form the consciences of church members. Moral teaching is ideally presented to individuals with an authority that is clear on principle and yet caring towards them and their own struggle. A pastoral approach seeking to challenge those who need challenging, without discouraging those who struggle, is a vital part of promoting allegiance to authoritative teaching. This is the genius of Jesus himself who convinced so many as one who taught with authority [Matt. 7.29].

In recent years human development has been a severe test of authority within Christianity. There has been polarisation among and within denominations between traditionalists and revisionists on issues such as contraception, women's ordination and same sex relationships. These debates have challenged those in authority within the Church to be both courageously counter-cultural and prudent, discerning what the Spirit may be saying through Christian experience on issues of the day.

The different cultures of the world challenge authoritative church teaching from different directions and this makes the recovery of universal Christian consensus the more urgent. The Anglican Communion is discovering the need for some sort of universal referee to help it keep together, as the diverse practices over women's ordination and the sanctioning of same-sex genital relationships tax the authorities of that church. There is some apparent movement in two directions: broadening papal and episcopal 'monarchical' authority and reining in 'democratic' synodical authority in reformed denominational streams.

In Christianity authority comes from God through the Church. Though Christians divide on some questions they agree on the need to welcome the gift of authority from God as his provision to keep his Church on track in the mission he has given her. The misuse of authority in the Church over the centuries has served to multiply Christian division and a loss of integrity of faith.

As Christians recover universal consensus it will be the servant-hearted exercise of authority that will best accomplish its Author's mission 'to gather up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth' [Ephes. 1.10]. **ND**

The Meaning Of Faith

John Twistleton considers the nature and meaning of faith, for the individual and for the Christian Community

To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible wrote Thomas Aquinas. This wisdom of this saying is brought out in the story of the acrobat who wheeled his son in a wheelbarrow as part of his high wire act. When they asked his son how he felt about the exercise his only comment was I trust my dad. Here is faith defined as the extra sense it is, quite beyond the natural senses, but nevertheless based on experience. The boy needed no explanation for the faith he had in his father though few others would rise to it.

By analogy Christian faith in God is the certain conviction you will be carried forward in all the perils of life by one who loves you beyond reason. The strength of Christianity lies in this revelation of God as the Father of Jesus who acts by his Spirit to carry us forward through all the pitfalls in our life to resurrection glory.

Reconciled to God through the death of his Son... we shall be saved by his life...we are filled with exultant trust in God through our Lord Jesus Christ St. Paul wrote to the Romans (5v10-11). Faith in the Christian perspective is such exultant trust in response to the gift of Jesus and all God promises through him.

If Christian faith is this quality by which one believes it is also the faith that is believed by Christians handed on to them by the community of faith and expressed in the creed. As Austin Farrer explained the creed defines the contours of that world on which faith trains her eyes...the widely spread circumference of God's revealing action in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Christians come to active faith through immersion in the community that believes in Jesus. Von Hugel described this corporate faith as the many-sided love of God only to be grasped 'with all the saints'. The content of the faith is spelled out in church catechisms which expound the bible, creed, sacraments, commandments and prayer. There are different emphases here among the denominations as to the content of so-called apostolic tradition eg. in the doctrine of the last things, the number of sacraments, the role of bishops including the Pope and so on although recent ecumenical agreements demonstrate a growing consensus of faith.

As something God-given personal faith is inevitably mysterious. Believers hold things together in their experience that live in tension from a rational perspective. Hence faith is both a virtue and a gift, a human act yet one prompted by God, a personal act yet inseparable from the corporate faith of the church. These paradoxes are captured in the famous definition of faith provided by Thomas Aquinas: Believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will moved by God through grace.

Though seen as a human act, faith is also something moved by God through grace. Though a subjective disposition it is one that embraces so-called divine

truth which is upheld by the authority of the church. It is upon this body of teaching, referred to earlier as the apostolic tradition, that Christians are seeking a fuller convergence

The subjective and objective aspects of faith are evident in the New Testament. Hence St. Paul writes I know whom I have believed (2 Timothy 1v12) witnessing his personal faith. Elsewhere as a church teacher he writes of the content of apostolic faith e.g. of the church tradition of the Eucharist I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you (1 Corinthians 11v23).

Another paradox is to be found in the relationship of Christian faith to human reason. God, the object of faith, is beyond reason but both faith and reason are seen as lifting people up to him. Thomas Merton writes: Faith without depending on reason for the slightest shred of justification never contradicts reason and remains ever reasonable. Though God is beyond reason as its creator he can never be at odds with it. Christian faith has a historical foundation in the death and resurrection of Jesus that can be rationally scrutinised, yet, however reasonable this foundation might be, faith does not depend upon it but on God who raises the dead (2 Corinthians 1v9b).

Each Sunday Christian faith is celebrated and built up through the celebration of the Lord's Day which is made so by the happening of Christ's resurrection from the dead. On account of this foundation faith for Christians is distinctively metaphysical, a creed that goes beyond (meta) the world as we see it (physical). As the most popular biblical definition set within the letter to the Hebrews expresses it, faith is certainty about things invisible (11v1b).

Like the natural eye the eye of personal faith is examined with difficulty because you are trying to look at something that is the main tool for looking, be it the natural or supernatural eye. To put faith in God as a Christian is like engaging with an invisible photo-electric beam to trigger a visible light. Like electricity God is unseen yet real. So real to Christian experience that the same writer of Hebrews, addressing Christians under heavy persecution, could speak of a certainty you can stake your life upon, a hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters... where Jesus...has entered (6v19-20).

Christian faith steers a middle way between credulity, which is trust in ambiguous authority, and scepticism, which is trust in the senses alone. As the main object of Christian faith God is believed without ambiguity as one who is certain though beyond reason or the senses. As mentioned earlier, the content of divine truth, or apostolic tradition is made ambiguous in some measure by Christian divisions.

To the eye of Christian faith God himself is as unambiguous as the sun for it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4v6) **ND**

though
seen
as a
human
act,
faith
is also
something
moved
by
God
through
grace

Hero of the faith

The following is an extract from the Opening Address at the National Assembly of Forward in Faith by National Secretary, **Fr Geoffrey Kirk**

Mr Chairman, I have heard complaints in the past that the Forward in Faith Assembly is orchestrated to the last word – not unlike the five yearly gathering of the Chinese Communist Party which is presently in session. But not so. And to prove it I want to introduce an item, un-orchestrated, un-announced and entirely mine own.

When I first began to observe the deliberations of the General Synod, there was one man on whose words I hung. A master of the English language, he was also the undoubted star of the Catholic Group at a time when there were other giants in the land. He was an architect of the Synodical system, who sought to teach it, in the days of its youth, the ways of wisdom and self-restraint. He was unfailingly courteous, always cou-



rageous, and above all else clear, precise and to-the-point.

He eloquently defended the position of those who opposed the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate over many years. More recently he served as one of the external assessors

who offered trenchant but constructive criticism to the authors of *Consecrated Women*?

I refer, of course, Chairman, to Mr Oswald Clarke.

This Assembly and this movement owe more to him than I could ever express. I hope you will not think it out of order for me at this early stage in the Assembly's deliberations to propose a heartfelt vote of thanks to him as his ninetieth birthday approaches. I cannot move it myself – but you could. And can I suggest at the same time that we determine to give him a small

gift as a sign of our affection and respect? Something elegant in glass – something Irish and eighteenth century would do the trick – and, of course, something equally elegant to put in it?

He is *my* hero of the faith; but he should be hailed as the hero of us all. **ND**

I'can't imagine where she is now,' a widowed man once complained to me. 'Tell me where she's gone,' he pleaded. The reality of death challenges us at every level of our being. The questions that arise in grief are life-changing questions. Responses and reactions to death are so individual that it is perhaps futile to give some advice in a short article. Think of what follows as a number of starting points; if one of them is helpful, follow it up. If they are not helpful, then let them pass.

First, we must be open to the graceful possibilities of bereavement. Remember the promise of Jesus: 'Blessed are those who mourn; they will be comforted.' The vulnerability that accompanies bereavement when offered to God can become a way of receiving God's grace in unexpected ways. Do not try to bear the burden alone. Recall the words of Jesus: 'Learn from me for I am meek and humble in heart and you will find rest.'

Secondly, we must also remember that 'things beyond our imagining have been prepared for those who love him.' At the point of physical death, the departed is liberated from the constraints of time

Ghostly Counsel

Living with death

Andy Hawes is Warden of Edenham Regional Retreat House

and space and begins a way of being that is beyond any concept or comparison we can hold in our minds.

Scripture does not have a clear description of life beyond death; indeed the pattern of change and development after physical death is not at all clear. We must however trust in the truth of the Lord's Resurrection. This is a time of letting go and living in the mystery of God's love and purpose as revealed in Christ.

This means that we must renew and deepen our devotion to Jesus who is the Resurrection and the Life and who is the Way into the Father's presence. He is Lord of the living and the dead and none are dead to him. In him, we are one with

those we love but see no more; we are part of the same body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful believers.

This is why the Eucharist is such a source of strength and healing for the bereaved. In the Eucharist, we are partakers in the life of Christ crucified, risen and glorified. In the Eucharist, we share in the worship of heaven and by the power of the Spirit are given a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. It is quite possible to be given real reassurance and comfort in Holy Communion that the departed are safe and secure in God's presence, the same presence made real to us in time and space in the Eucharist.

Those who mourn will find a companion (a bread-sharer) in Jesus who wept at the grave of Lazarus; the tears of Jesus are a reminder to us all that the pain of separation is a real one, a pain that the Lord himself knows and shares.

The answer to the widower's question is: 'I don't know, but we must trust what Jesus promises that there is a place prepared and it is a place where he is. This means that we can learn about the place by getting to know him.'

Division in unity

*This is an edited version of the submission of **Root** to the Bishop of Manchester's Group – rather technical perhaps but giving the rest of us an insight into present difficulties*

Religious Communities find themselves in three differing situations. There are first of all some Religious Communities in the Church of England for whom there was no difficulty envisaged in women being ordained to the episcopate.

For a number of other Communities, there are real and conscientious objections to accepting any such ordinations, for the reasons outlined in the Rochester Report and *Consecrated Women?*

And thirdly there are those Communities where the numbers of those in support and those conscientiously opposed are more or less evenly divided. For these Communities the matter is more complex. It is the experience of these (divided) communities, who have had to live with the demands of being 'two integrities' and to carry on living side by side in a common life together, that *Root* would wish to bring to the Group's attention.

Decisions so far

The following decisions of particular Communities reflect the seriousness with which Religious Communities have taken the spirit of the Act of Synod, and the whole matter of 'two integrities'. They help inform the following section which reflects on the results of their experience:

The Society of St Francis (SSF) decided at an early stage that they had to get together and listen together, airing the difficulties. Emphasis was placed on dialoguing with each other. This is understood to be vital to avoid the common stereotypes of liberal/feminist v. Forward in Faith/traditionalist.

The Community of the Resurrection (CR) at Mirfield, another men's Community, made a decision to live and seek to manage the matter together, whilst according one another the mutual respect charity requires.

The Order of the Holy Paraclete (OHP), another (women's) Community, decided as a Community before the vote that they would do whatever the Synod decided.

The Community of the Holy Name (CHN), the Sisters of the Love of God (SLG), the Community of St Mary the Virgin (CSMV), the Order of St Benedict (OSB) at Alton and Elmore, and the Society of St Margaret (SSM) have come in

differing ways to live and work with the situation, and in making arrangements for those opposed. In the last-named only (SSM), each house is independent and so chose its own position. Most but not all of those sisters who were opposed to women's ordination relocated to the house at Walsingham, which became a traditionalist house.

Experience of division

Each of these (divided) Communities has had to look hard at and live daily with the matter ever since 1992 and the Act of Synod which followed it. In a direct and immediate way, they have had to learn the meaning of living together as 'two integrities'.

the question of priestly ministry strikes at the very heart of our consecrated life

For those conscientiously objecting, many would want to express their wish to remain both in their Communities and in the Church of England, the church of their baptism and nurturing in the Christian faith. This is of course provided they are allowed to do this without having to compromise their faith.

The daily Eucharist

For those Communities that are divided rather than completely in support or opposed, the principal difficulty centres around the celebration of the daily Eucharist, the norm in most if not all Religious Communities. The question of priestly ministry therefore strikes at the very heart of our consecrated life.

The problem is not so acute in men's communities, which usually have their own priests, but is much more so in women's Communities, who often depend on priests from outside. The difficulties arise for those conscientiously opposed either because a member of the Community herself has become a priest, and so regularly celebrates, or a women priest is invited in to celebrate.

These difficulties are not insignificant, and it has not been unknown for there to be a failure in some Communities to pro-

vide proper alternative arrangements for those with objections. To balance that, it has also to be said that a number of women's Communities *have* been diligent in providing for such a need.

The irony of this is that some Religious Communities, whose whole purpose is to express the unity of a common life, experience division at the altar. The Eucharist for many Religious thus sadly turns from being 'a gathering of the Church to be the Church', into mere 'holy communion', a private individual sacramental communion with the Lord, yet hardly what the Church has always understood to be the true character of Eucharist.

Some conclusions

What many Religious Communities would wish to underline from their experience is the importance of listening to the concerns of 'the other', which is a *hearing in the Spirit*, and not merely a listening to words. It may be that such communities from their experience of living and working together through these issues have a real contribution to make towards any structural solution. They have been sustained through their common life and the exercise of charity to safeguard the integrity of conscience of each member.

This is important since it has been and continues to be under threat when proper legal and canonical provision is not made, or not faithfully observed. As members of Religious Communities, we are very conscious of being part of the whole Church, and the fact that what the Church of England is doing is, in relation to the whole Church, only a minority act. It may be that the whole Church one day decides for this but until that day, it is important that the position of those who are unable in conscience to accept such an unilateral act needs to be safeguarded. They ought *not* to be driven out of the Church of their baptism by being presented with an impossible position.

We would want the Group to take note of the effect ordaining women to the episcopate will have on many Communities, particularly those Communities that are evenly divided on the matter, so that proper provision is made. It would be our hope that any structural solution would enable members of both sides to continue to live together in the same Community. **ND**

St Clement

*Despite the fact that it was written almost two millennia ago, a letter of St Clement to the Corinthians contains much that is relevant to the problems of the Church today. **Paul Griffin** explains*

Each year on 23 November we celebrate St Clement's day. He is referred to in the calendar as 'Bishop of Rome, Martyr c.100'. He held his post only a couple of bishops after St Peter himself, and industrious excavators have turned up various bits of writing that have been ascribed to him. Of them, the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians seems genuine beyond reasonable doubt, and has points for us.

We know from St Paul that the Corinthians could be a terrible nuisance. On this occasion, they have deposed some priests, no doubt substituting men they preferred. Whether this was the result of a vote in the equivalent of a synod, we do not know. Anyway, why worry? Can people not have the priests they want? No doubt a number of people today would say they can.

Clement will emphatically not have this. He sees that if the Church is going to be more than a bunch of human beings doing what they like and to Gehenna with everybody else, there has to be some outside authority, and that authority must include the ordaining and appointing of priests. He says that the Apostles, the last of whom had probably died not

long before, 'appointed bishops and deacons' and directed how the ministry was to be continued. So he says the priests at Corinth must be reinstated.

The point is that one Church must not be suffered to become many churches, each teaching a variant Gospel. It is not that congregations do not deserve to be consulted about their particular needs, just that they cannot expect to be given the final decision.

This is such straight common sense that one wonders how anyone can have argued with it. It certainly seemed so to the Church for many centuries, as they fought off threatening heresies and divisions. The majority would accept it still; but of course no sound policy is proof against human fallibility, the abuse of power, or against political influences. Authority can become authoritarianism; a local church can be subject to intense pressure, as it was under Communism, when some of the wisest and best of people believed compromise to be a condition of survival. The shift of power from Rome to Constantinople, the nature and behaviour of medieval Popes and other Church leaders, the Crusades, Fascism, Communism, famine, war and

even prosperity have all contributed to the pressure upon apostolic authority in which St Clement so firmly believed.

The endless trouble of the ages has often persuaded people at their wits' end to look for a less vulnerable authority, an unalterable basis of faith which can solve all problems. Islam and biblical fundamentalism offer just such a basis. More subtle forms of this temptation offer themselves to apparently more enlightened congregations. Our bishops are there to guard us against falling for this. No comment.

St Clement is helpful to us in another way. He refers to the special function of priests as 'offering gifts', by which he seems to mean celebrating the Eucharist. In other words, it was not right for Tom, Dick or Harry to officiate at the Mass: the bishop's authority by ordination was needed. Here perhaps is a warning about any local tendency in the Anglican Church to introduce lay presidency.

St Clement refers to bishops as 'rulers' of the Church. Perhaps inadvertently he seems to be making a parallel with worldly methods of rule, as if bishops were to be little Caesars or Procurators. I find this notion acutely uncomfortable, our own methods of rule being what they are. I think one has to hold on to the truth that Christian government is *sui generis*, of its own sort, and based on the life of our Lord, whose authority over his disciples was complete, because it was based on love and humility.

I hope and believe that that was dear St Clement's intention. **ND**

To the point

May an incumbent invite a priest of the Traditional Anglican Communion to preside at the Eucharist in his church?

Canon C8, the provisions of which are complex, governs the exercise of ministry within the Church of England. The normal rule is that a priest may officiate in a place only after he has received authority to do so from the bishop of the diocese. However, an incumbent may allow a cleric to minister for a period of not more than seven days within three months without reference to the bishop providing he is satisfied by actual personal knowledge or by good and sufficient evidence that the cleric is of good life and standing and is otherwise qualified under the Canon. This provision is subject to important exceptions

concerning overseas clergy and clergy of other churches.

A minister who has been ordained by an overseas bishop (a bishop having a diocese outside the provinces of Canterbury, York, Ireland, Scotland or Wales) or by a bishop in a Church not in communion with the Church of England may only officiate with the permission of the Archbishop of the relevant province (who must be satisfied that the orders of that Church are recognized or accepted by the Church of England).

The current edition of The Canons of the Church of England lists churches in communion with the Church of England, but the Traditional Anglican Communion (TAC) is not one of them. It is unlikely, therefore, that the incumbent may invite the TAC priest to preside without obtaining the permission of the

IX Continuing Anglicans

Archbishop. There may be exceptions, such as for a priest who was ordained in the Church of England and is now in the TAC, but also has permission to officiate in an Anglican diocese. However, a wise incumbent should check with his bishop or archbishop, because allowing a priest to officiate in breach of Canon C8 could render him (and the officiating priest) liable to disciplinary proceedings.

The TAC is not a Church to which the Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure 1988 applies and so it would appear that no TAC priest (or lay person) may read the Scriptures, lead intercessions, preach or perform any other function which Canon B43 permits members of other churches to perform in the Church of England.

Our lawyers are happy to answer reader's questions about church law - please email tothepoint@forwardinfaith.com

The master touch

Arthur Middleton encourages us to draw inspiration from the example of the great priests of the Anglo-Catholic tradition

Who would be a priest? It was the title of a pamphlet published in 1953 by SPCK and is a world away from the human rights dominated, politically correct and management mentality of today's adviser/priest church.

It opens with a priest called Bernard in hospital recovering from an operation. Sunday morning had never been an opportunity for lying in bed, which was only a place to sleep until the alarm dragged you out on your knees for another day's work. He couldn't remember the last time he missed a Sunday at the altar. As he dozed and awoke with the ward buzzing around him, a phrase kept coming into his mind: 'loving people into holiness, loving people into holiness.'

The hospital chaplain was relieved to find another priest to whom he could talk of his difficulties. This young harassed chaplain told the old story of a difficult matron, agnostic doctors and lack of response from nurses and patients. Bernard told the chaplain, 'All you have to do, my dear brother, is to try loving them into holiness.'

He wondered if it would help the chaplain in the same way that it had certainly helped him as an *ideal*. Is it too far removed from the weekday and Sunday chores of the parish priest, he thought? Then he remembered that it is just what our Lord did to Peter and Mary Magdalene and the rest. Also, he does it to us and he wants us priests to do it to our flock.

Preaching Jesus

Scouting had brought Bernard into contact with Skip Marten, a chronic asthmatic, an untiring priest of young people who 'so lived that he magnetized,' without fussiness. He had no aspirations for a living, as he was best when second in command. His example, rather than any word from Skip, had inspired Bernard's vocation. 'And, in camp, at the altar under the trees in the early morning as he celebrated the Holy Mysteries, all his love of nature and love of people seemed almost visibly swept up into his love of Christ in the Sacrament; and he would reflect that love all day long, patiently, firmly, humorously, shrewdly.'

Skip Marten is an example of those who preached Jesus Christ in a way that had not been preached for many years. The strength of Catholic Anglicanism has been the recovery of the parish as central to the Church's mission, where there emerged a Christian sanctity not seen in England for decades, even centuries. Today it has not been seen anywhere else.

Evangelistic holiness

It was a missionary sanctity, an evangelistic holiness that was rooted in the deep convictions of great parish priests living austere and disciplined lives and in consequence with the evangelists' love for human souls. Hidden daily with 'Christ in God' and praying without ceasing, they lived in the milieu of heaven. In their company, one became conscious that the unseen world is the real world, and Christianity is caught before being taught. From such priests it was caught and taught as well.

'Loving people into holiness' is the most effective preaching of all, because unmistakably it demonstrates the self-sacrificing

love of Christ in which such priests live. It was the inevitable consequence of their selfless love of God and man as they burned out their lives in the service of their master. From them it spilled out to the souls for which they yearned and which they believed could be reached and restored. This reached out to housing, feeding, rescuing and loving everybody who needed it.

The dynamic impulse was not in their thoughts but in their hearts as they identified passionately and sympathetically with the countless people won for Christ and his Church by being brought into contact with holiness of this order.

This evangelistic holiness was a fruit of the Catholic Movement and was built upon the strength and richness of the interior devotional life of such priests, who never left their personal devotions to chance or momentary inspiration, but studied them, systematized them and regulated them.

Hence, there was always a freshness and spontaneity in their prayers, their sacraments and their meditations because they knew exactly where to go for inspiration and guidance. The basic premise of their lives was 'Not mine but

Thine', the premise of their Master's life, whose Cross they had taken up.

Not career priests

They were not ambitious careerists but priests who worked long hours and had a firm grasp of the job to be done and how to do it. It was normal for an Anglo-Catholic priest to remain in a slum parish his entire ministry. He went where he was sent and worked till he dropped. Parish visiting had purpose and point and bore fruit, while confirmation classes produced communicants.

In visiting the sick and dying, these priests were aware of what was needed and were always properly dressed, often in cassocks in the streets of their parishes to identify their priestly ministry. In many parishes around the country, the average parish priest was doing this. Even in my own lifetime, I remember robed priests and a bishop walking from the church through the parish to the home of a woman to confirm her before she died of cancer.

Each of these priests knew that he was the only one in the community with a ministry of Word and Sacrament and, although he reached out with a social gospel, he was not a mere social worker. He was there to demonstrate that the Church is centred in the Incarnation, of which the sacraments are a natural outcome and the powerful instruments of God to eternal life; so he brought certainties, not vague answers to life's problems. His ministry was to demonstrate that absolute holiness is possible to anyone; therefore it was only natural to seek it, because it was the only way to human fulfilment. Worship illustrates the organic connection between liturgy, life and education that has a converting influence, and is not entertainment.

The renewal of our Church needs a revival of this Catholic spirit. These great priests have proved by 'stirring up the gift that is in them' that Christian renewal is possible in the wastelands of English life through their self-sacrificing love of Christ, whereby they have subdued kingdoms and wrought righteousness. **ND**

No king but Caesar

George Austin describes the increasing conflict between Church and State in the centuries leading up to the breach with Rome

When a new diocesan bishop pays homage to the Queen on appointment, he apparently agrees to hand over both the temporalities and the spiritualities of the see to the monarch in an oath which, until recently, was kept so confidential by the church that the bishop was not allowed to see it until the moment of homage. Perhaps there was a fear that he might refuse on the grounds that the spiritualities belonged to God alone and were not within his power to hand over to a secular ruler. But a hard-won bishopric is probably too great a prize to risk.

It had been so too during the reign of William Rufus when Anselm attempted to save the Church from the ruin the king was bringing by his policies, but the bishops, shrewd enough to know the dangers, let him down. Anselm fled abroad, returning under Henry I only when he knew he could win. In 1106, the king agreed that the investiture of a bishop would be by the Pope, and Anselm made certain concessions in the matter of bishops paying homage to the king. The price was more papal control, for which a greater price would be paid later.

Papal 'provisions'

Also, it annoyed the king. A bishop was not only a spiritual leader but a feudal tenant-in-chief with great temporal estates as well as much secular power and responsibility, even to the raising of armies to support the monarch. In the fourteenth century, Archbishop Melton of York together with other bishops took troops to fight the Scots, and was roundly defeated at Myton-on-Swale. His successor, William de la Zouche, together with his clergy, led a division to defeat the Scots at the battle of Neville's Cross.

The castles and palaces of the prince bishops today, not to mention their seats in the House of Lords, are a modern remnant of these medieval 'temporalities', not to be relinquished lightly for

their symbolic and elitist status even 900 years later.

The greater papal control soon displeased the English Church. As the Pope sought to increase the central power of the papacy, he needed money to pay for more officials in Rome. To do so, he appointed them to benefices they never visited and from which they drew a considerable income, while paying a small stipend to the priest on the spot. These 'provisions' became common in England after King John's submission in 1215, and were increasingly unpopular.

By the second half of the fourteenth century, papal 'provisions' were declared by government statute to be invalid to English parishes, and the chronicles and literature of the time are full of laments about the state of the Church – not only about papal power, but also despising 'worldly and venal bishops; idle, absentee clergy; rich sporting monks; hypocritical and grasping friars.'

Even so, at the time of the Black Death it had been the parish clergy who had almost certainly suffered the highest mortality because of their pastoral care of the sick and dying, so is perhaps not surprising that it is the Poor Parson who is given the most sympathetic treatment in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

State regains control

By the end of the fifteenth century, the State, in the person of the king, was gradually regaining the power it had lost to the Pope. When a see became vacant, the king would select a man whom he thought would be useful to him, forward his name to the Pope, and if the nomination was not ratified, the see remained vacant. When king and Pope agreed to some sort of bargain, the name was sent to the cathedral chapter for election and the canons could not reject the candidate. It is a system that continues even today when any canon who refuses to vote for the monarch's choice will be declared 'contumacious.' Those who have dared to do so say that it leaves a good feeling to be so condemned.

It was in the 1530s that the clash between Church and State approached its climax. King Henry VIII, whose greed had led him to attack the monasteries for their wealth, used the papal problems in Church/State relations as the excuse, and

in neither area did he gain the wholesale support of either the aristocracy or the common people, for whom the Catholic religion played a fundamental part in their lives.

Pilgrimage of Grace

A major manifestation of this was the Pilgrimage of Grace, which began in the autumn of 1536 but which had been smouldering for some nine years. Their leaders insisted throughout that it was not a rising against the king, but rather the result of his new laws against the Church as well as such actions as the divorce of his wife, which had brought condemnation from the Pope.

In particular, it was the behaviour of the king's commissioners, set the task of inspecting the religious houses and assessing their wealth, that had caused greatest concern. Two commissioners in particular, Layton and Legh, carried out their duties arrogantly, bullying the people and communities they were appointed to examine. As a reward for his efforts, Layton received his thirty pieces of silver in his appointment as Dean of York.

The Pilgrimage was doomed to failure. A truce was negotiated, meetings held, promises made in the king's name, pardons agreed, and all of it nothing but bluff to produce acquiescence. Some wily aristocrats carefully changed sides; Archbishop Lee of York behaved as he had always done by seeking to avoid any commitment that could be held against him by anyone; a few saved themselves by incriminating others; and its leaders were beguiled into meeting the king, believing they would be received warmly for bringing the revolt to an end.

Instead they were brutally executed, with the Pilgrimage's major player, Robert Aske, being dragged on a hurdle through the streets of York and slaughtered at Clifford's Tower, where his bodily remains were left to rot as a warning lest any others revolt against the king.

Shortly afterwards came the final breach with Rome and papal power was at an end. Henry VIII took the spiritualities to himself, declaring that he was the Supreme Head on earth of the Church of England, with powers so great as even to include the definition of dogma. The Church now had no king but Caesar. **ND**

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devotional

Kept in thy name

A Sister of the Community of the Holy Cross Rempstone

'Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one' [John 17.11, RSV].

We can scarcely pride ourselves on being one in our Father's house. Some are even reluctant to call God Father at all. A first step then towards unity, harmony and peace is to recognize who our God actually is. He is whom he has revealed himself to be. Our text from St John shows us that our unity can only be restored to us in and by the Father. As an old Compline hymn puts it, 'O Father bring us back again, Who on this day have strayed from you.'

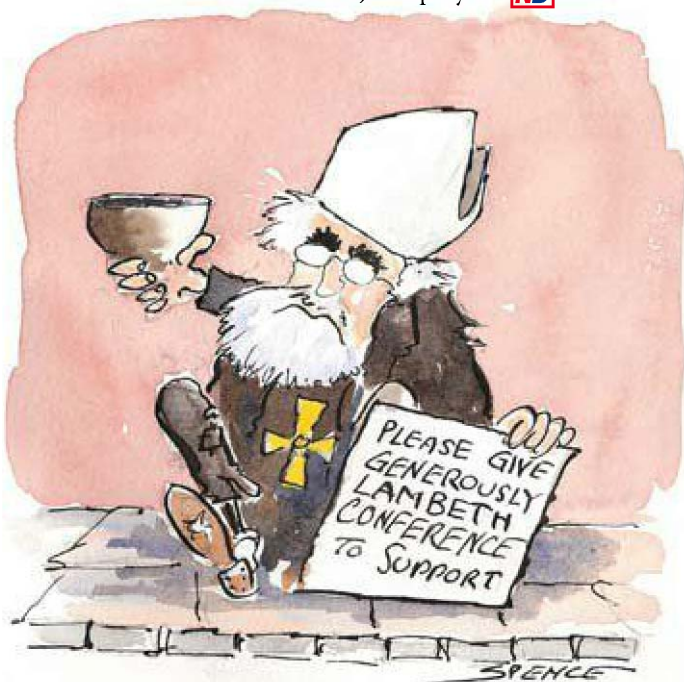
There has been much disputing as to whether we shouldn't call God Mother rather than Father. But God is patient, showing the gentle tenderness of a long-suffering mother in the process. It is in the Father's name, nevertheless, that we have to be kept. Has our Lord's Prayer been heard? Have we been kept by the Father, safe in his name, in his being, in his totality? Since we are at sixes and sevens with each other, it somehow looks as though things have gone awry. Yes indeed, though not from God's side, but from ours. We have wandered away in many directions and lost not only one another but something of God too. It was for this very reason that Jesus needed to ask his Father, just before his Passion, to hold us together afterwards.

But what else can we glean from the text? There is a conundrum for a start. It is not entirely clear what Jesus is saying. What or who is it that he claims the Father has actually given to him? The Scripture versions differ here because of the original ambiguity. The Jerusalem Bible takes it to mean that the Father has entrusted the apostles, and other believers by inference, into the Son's hands: 'Holy Father, keep those you have given me true to your name.'

Our version, however, suggests that the Father has entrusted his own very name to his Son, and hence, through him to all faithful believers: 'Keep them in thy name which thou hast given me.'

Ultimately, there is no discrepancy. Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, Word and Image of the Father, is as the Father is, save that he is begotten. He has the Father's name – all, as it were, that makes the Father God – and this he imparts to his followers, who are God's gift to him. Earlier in John, Jesus says, 'No one can come to me, except it is granted him by the Father' [John 6.65].

Thus, the Father 'gives' believers to the Son, and equally 'gives' all that he himself is to the Son, and hence to us who believe. Unaccountably, we all share in the mystery of the divine Fatherhood. Likewise, as members of the Church, the Bride of Christ, it is ours to be feminine and motherly also. Of all this, our human experience of masculinity and femininity is but a pale reflection. Sadly, we are in competition across the sexual divide, blurring the edges in wrong ways. Part of the way back is to reclaim God as our Father and the Church as Mother, so that we may one day find ourselves made truly one in the Father's name, as Jesus prayed. **ND**



Make 'em work

'Trick or treat' is now the youthful litany for All Souls-tide. Once it was 'Penny for the Guy.'

Supplanting folk customs, whether Bonfire Night or old-style Halloween, by modern American re-vamping or Harry Pottering has caused comment. The danger of trivializing the occult or door knocking trick 'n' treaters disturbing the cultured calm of traditional *Big Brother* and *X Factor* viewing has been the usual approach.

I want to come at it another way. In using this phrase, I am giving my own precautionary Halloween style treat to American usage.

Firstly a lament for the de-skilling of the art of begging. Traditionally beggars gave in anticipation of getting. Whether it was showing wounds and wounding other ears by singing, or by displaying a November Fifth effigy, there was a mutual exchange – as witness 'Penny for the Guy.'

The Kentish fishing town of Whitstable had its own begging custom. On St James' Day not Bonfire Day, youngsters built grottos of shells (from Whitstable oysters), the badge of pilgrimage to Compostela. Their cry 'Remember the grotter'; their hope – landing a penny. Grotto or Guy, children made something themselves.

Yet dressing in a supermarket purchased plastic black cloak is the equivalent of Tracey Emin undressing her bed, a victory of conceptual over creative art.

Creative decline began when plastic Guy Fawkes masks replaced stocking-filled heads, a decline equalled by modern carollers who cannot get beyond the first line of *Jingle Bells*.

The Guy Fawkes story was rooted in a real event. 'Remember, remember the 5th of November.' Either remembrance of an evil 17th cent attack on democracy foiled, or the evil persecution of a religious minority. In either case it was a real evil. Evil in the modern commercialized Halloween is fantasized and transferred from real life murders, terrorism, economic exploitation and ethnic cleansing to imaginary witches and zombies.

So if your door is knocked next Halloween give the callers a Google print-out on Guy Fawkes. Unless, of course, the callers are the local Churches Together choir singing one line of *Jingle Bells*.

Alan Edwards

The Holy One

The vision of the Lord described in Isaiah 6 emphasizes the message that Christ alone is holy
Patrick Henry Reardon is a Senior Editor of *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*

When we speak of Christ, among all human beings, as ‘alone holy,’ the expression is not one of simple degree. He is not only holier than the rest of us. He is holy in a sense very different from the rest of us. His is not a derived holiness. It is the very holiness of God, ‘for in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily’ [Col. 2.9]. The first person in history to perceive this, I suppose, was the prophet Isaiah, who, in mystic vision in the Temple, ‘saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up.’ Isaiah, being a man of unclean lips and coming from the midst of a people of unclean lips, might not have perceived the holiness of this enthroned Lord, but the voices of the Seraphim left him little room for doubt. ‘Holy, holy, holy,’ they cried, ‘the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’

There is a sense in which this scene in Isaiah 6 is our first treatise in Christology. Indeed, the New Testament writers perceived in this call of Isaiah a prophetic adumbration of the mystery that they themselves were called to proclaim. The explanation of their insight requires what may seem at first a digression, but we must make it anyway. An important component of the work of the New Testament writers was to address the singular, dark mystery of the Messiah’s rejection by the Chosen People, and they had recourse to Isaiah 6 in order to throw light on this matter. Had not Isaiah been ordered to preach with such clarity that only hardness of heart would explain the rejection of his message [Isa. 6.9–10]? The Lord told him, ‘Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’ Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their

eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed.’

This same hardness of heart met by the preaching of Isaiah, the New Testament writers saw, was the key to the Jews’ refusal to recognize their Messiah, the same Messiah foretold by that ancient prophet. Because Jesus was rejected for the same reason that the preaching of Isaiah was rejected, the New Testament writers quoted these very words of Isaiah’s prophecy in order to explain the matter [Matt 13.14–15; Mark 4.12; Luke 8.10; Acts 28.26–7]; that is to say, the people who rejected the prophecies of Isaiah could hardly do other than reject the One whom Isaiah prophesied.

The Evangelist John, who also cites these words from the Book of Isaiah to make the same point [John 12.39–40], goes on to elaborate on the original context of those words: ‘These things Isaiah said when *he saw his glory and spoke of him*’ [12.41]. In this very important text, John recognizes Jesus as the ‘Lord’ of whom the Seraphim cried, ‘Holy, holy, holy.’

To this day, this Isaian text prompts us to pray to Christ our Lord, ‘Thou alone art holy.’ Indeed, during the Divine Liturgy, we take up again the cry of the Seraphim to chant to the Lord Christ, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy.’ It is no wonder that Isaiah is sometimes called ‘the fifth Evangelist.’ When Isaiah describes this ‘Lord’ as ‘high and lifted up’ (*ram wenissa* – 6.1; 57.15), he employs the same expression that later portrays the Suffering Servant [52.13]. The Lord and the Suffering Servant are, in fact, the same Person, the One who alone is holy. Our Lord, both God and man, is the only ‘saint.’ All holiness comes into humanity through him, not only by way of channel but also by way of font.

Sacred vision

The medieval village of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon lies just across from the busy town of Avignon. In contrast to the town, the village and its museum offer an oasis of calm – the museum is devoted to one work, Enguerrand Quarton’s *Coronation of the Virgin*.

This altarpiece was painted during 1453–4 for the local Carthusian monastery. It fills a complete wall of the museum. Unusually the original specification for the picture survives. It is a list of Christian teachings which Quarton faithfully turned into paint – anyone interested can find an analysis of how this was done in Fr John Saward’s *Sweet and Blessed Country*.

The picture shows the Virgin crowned by the Trinity, surrounded by saints and angels. At the bottom of the picture Christ on the cross opens the way to heaven. To his right there is Rome, beneath which is Purgatory; to his left there is Jerusalem, beneath which is Hell. The picture is densely populated with saints and sinners, angels and devils, and yet all this is dominated by the central group, of Father, Son,



Quarton – Coronation of the Virgin

Spirit and Virgin. These four make two triangles, that of Mary pointing up to heaven, that of the Trinity pointing down to the cross.

The Trinity and Mary dominate the picture, not just by their design, but by their size and boldness. Even more wonderful and striking is the way the Father and the Son are a mirror image of one another, to the extent that it is not obvious which is which, until you remember the Son sits at the Father’s right. And Mary has the same family

resemblance. She is clearly the mother of Jesus and the Mother of God.

Quarton has brought home the central teaching of Christianity, that he who has seen Jesus has seen God the Father. At the same time, because Jesus is so clearly his mother’s son, he also emphasizes that Jesus is truly man as well as truly God. This great Christian painting makes Christ’s Incarnation not dry theologizing but the living truth – Jesus is God and man.

Owen Higgs

Displaced altars

*Peter Mullen offers a cheerful rant against the use of nave altars
a secularization of the liturgy which destroys the symbolic
purpose of church design and the mystery of the Sacrament*

I have just got back from a visit to some notable French churches – particularly the shrine of Mary Magdalene at Vezelay and the glorious Bourges cathedral. Apart from Paris, France is mainly rural with a sense of spaciousness, and every village has its ancient church. They are acutely short of priests of course, but when you visit those medieval churches, you can still sense the Middle Ages, the lingering presence of what used to be known as Christendom.

There is one flaw which disfigures these evocative church buildings, and this is the bringing forward of the high altar from its proper place under the east wall and setting it up at the head of the nave. It is not just Bourges and Vezelay, but Rheims and St Peter's in Rome, Canterbury and York and almost all the parish churches throughout Europe.

Purpose of the design

This is a fairly recent desecration. Until the Second Vatican Council in the Sixties and the dumbed-down modernization of church services by the Church of England's Liturgical Commission which began about the same time, the interiors of our churches and cathedrals were so ordered as to be conduits for awe and holy fear, to remind us of the majesty of God and the lineaments of the Christian life.

Before this blasphemous meddling occurred, we understood from a church's design that the Christian life is a pilgrimage of grace which begins at the font at the back, proceeds to the chancel step where we are confirmed and married and reaches its fulfilment in the extreme east at the high altar in the sacrifice of the Mass and the receiving of the Body and Blood of Christ.

The altar dumped at the head of the nave destroys this spiritual progression by savagely interrupting it. It is blasphemous because it removes awe, wonder and mystery. It obliterates the internal coherence of the church by rendering the east end – what is meant to be the apogee – redundant. The nave altar even *looks* out of place and you are left wondering why ever they decided to put it there.

The answer is a loss of nerve and confidence by the hierarchy and the destruction of tangible holiness by the very

people, bishops and the like, who were ordained and appointed to uphold it. No persecution by external enemies can ever harm the Church. We are only undermined when our own bishops and councils and synods behave as people who think the Faith incredible. More even than the imposition of the crass modern liturgies, this single act of physical vandalism has diminished what is numinous, the sense of the holy.

Mystery and reverence

The nave altar, with the priest standing behind it and facing the congregation, represents the secularization of the Sacrament and the destruction of the central mystery. The people of God were not meant to stand like idle spectators gawping at the consecration of the sacred elements. The manual actions of the over-the-table priest resemble the motions of the conjurer or the shopkeeper.

the people of God were not meant to stand gawping at the consecration of the sacred elements

The saints themselves warned us relentlessly of the danger of becoming too familiar with holy things. There is meant to be awe and mystery. The mystery works two ways: from God to us and from us back to God in response, through the priest. The actions of the priest at the consecration are something that he does before God on behalf of the people. The next logical step is to have lay people celebrate the Mass; and, predictably, there is a campaign for just this.

The physical grammar of the east end altar is a perfect liturgical and theological representation of what is going on in the Mass. The priest faces the east wall or window which is the symbol of God's transcendence and speaks with God on behalf of the people. Having his back to the people is not discourtesy towards them but reverence – from the priest and the people – towards God. Of course he does not have his back to the people all the time: with perfect consistency, he

turns to face the people when he speaks to them on behalf of God – when he pronounces the Absolution, for example.

The liturgical iconoclasts argued that the over-the-table rite at a nave altar symbolizes Christ's accessibility to all. The veil of the levitical Temple from the Old Testament days has been rent in twain. But the price paid for this false theologizing is desacralization. The mystery has departed – and with it the glory and the blessing.

The modernizers' reasons

The modern liturgists say that the priests of the early Church celebrated the Mass facing the people. Perhaps, but that was centuries before the theological genius represented by the form and structure of the gothic cathedral: the Incarnation in glass and stone. We are traditionalists; but we are not prisoners of history, as our opponents make us out to be. The faith develops: that is, Christ's promise of the Holy Ghost to teach us and to lead us into all truth; not to locate the whole truth in any particular moment of history. Besides, it is odd to hear these liturgical progressives telling us to follow the procedures of the first century when they also declare that we cannot understand the language of the seventeenth-century Book of Common Prayer.

They argued also that the west-facing priest makes the whole liturgical action more open and inclusive. This is nonsense, for it places the priest and people together in a circle, which excludes those who are beyond its circumference. The liturgical circle whose centre is the nave altar excludes the world beyond and so destroys the missionary and outreach symbolism that was always clear in the traditional way.

If Christianity in Europe is to survive in the face of militant, expansionary Islam and the virulent secularizing tendencies of our own elite, then we need to recover the sense of sacred mystery and holy fear. The secularizing, democratizing hierarchies have had it their way for forty years with the result that churches have emptied. Any restoration must begin with a counter-revolution. Replacing the altar to its proper place would be the most important single act in the holy warfare we are called to engage in. **ND**

Hot under the collar

The Fourth Estate took a break from its usual *gay-bishop-schism-shock-horror* mode early last month to report on the suggestion that clergy should stop wearing dog collars, as it would make their lives safer. The *Sunday Telegraph* rolled out Fr David Houlding to say how safe he felt wearing his – whereupon his words of common sense were soon to be found gracing *Christianity Today*, *The Cape Times* of South Africa, *The Times-Reporter* of Canton, Ohio, *The Canadian Press*, *The International Herald Tribune*, to say nothing of *BBC Radio 2*. Two serious questions arise out of all this.

First, what on earth makes the author of the offending report – one Nick Tolson of something apparently called *National Churchwatch* – think that a priest looks any less like a priest when he's not wearing a dog collar? And, second, why on earth didn't the press approach our very own Fr Geoffrey Kirk for his take on the issue? After all, he has been known to swap his extensive collection of silk ties for a clerical collar on the odd occasion...



High Flying

News reaches 30DAYS to the effect that the new Principal of the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield is to be a Dr Joseph Kennedy from Cambridge. Intrigued, we turn to Crockford to check out his CV. Following his ordination in 2002, Joe seems to have spent one year in his title parish, followed by a second curacy of two years, after which he has spent two years as a college chaplain. And, er, that's it.

Hopefully, though, his long and impressive list of qualifications (BSc, BD, PGCE, MSt and DPhil) will go some way towards supplementing his long and varied parochial experience in his challenging new work preparing candidates for the parish ministry. Still, give it two years, and he'll be ripe for election to an American bishopric (see 30DAYS *passim*).



Dumb ceremony

Mindful perhaps of the Holy Father's admonition to revisit traditional liturgical rites, the Feminist Reading Group at Westcott House put the clock back

to the early 1970s for mass on the feast of St Teresa of Avilla. Students entering the chapel were surprised to find that the usual seating had been removed to make way for a large vulva picked out in tea lights.



Pools News

30DAYS recently heard from the Parish Priest of S.Michael & All Angels, Inverness, Fr Len Black, who wondered if we had spotted the news release issued by the Vatican, denying it had bought a football team. Apparently, Holy See Press Office Director Fr Federico Lombardi SJ was forced to deny reports that the Vatican or the Italian Episcopal Conference had bought the Italian football team Ancona, which plays in the third division.

It seems that Ancona football club and the *Centro Sportivo Italiano* have recently signed an agreement involving the application of an ethical code in the administration of the team, alongside a new model of economic management, the promotion of a sporting culture among the fans, and support for social initiatives in the Third World. For its part, the *Centro Sportivo Italiano* has undertaken to seek sponsors for the club. 'The Vatican and the Italian Episcopal Conference have nothing to do with this project,' declared Fr. Lombardi. 'There are initiatives which have positive and commendable aims and, if the declared intentions can be effectively achieved, this is certainly a good thing,' he said adding, however, that this does not mean that this is an initiative of the Vatican or of the Italian Episcopal Conference. Members of the Ancona football club were due to participate in an upcoming general audience in St Peter's Square but this, Fr. Lombardi made clear, did not mean 'that the Pope has sponsored or taken responsibility for the working of the team.'

Fr Black told 30DAYS that this seemed a great shame, and wondered whether NEW DIRECTIONS might not agree to trump the Holy See by agreeing to sponsor Inverness Caledonian Thistle, on the somewhat spurious grounds that many of the team drink with him in the Clachnaharry Inn.

Given that, at the time of writing, ICT are languishing near the foot of the Scot-

tish Premier League, having lost three times as many matches as they have won, it seems clear that they do indeed need some new directions - perhaps they might start with 'out of the pub, lads, and back to the training ground'!



Sale of the Century

To make room on the shelves of the Philpott Library (nothing to do with the Vicar of S.Peter's, Plymouth, but a library of 2,000 books given by Bishop Phipott in the 19th century for use of the clergy), the Diocese of Truro recently sanctioned a sale of some of the books by the library's trustees. Not bothering to have the books valued by experts or auctioneers, the trustees invited various book dealers to make offers and in due course accepted an offer of £36,000 from a Mr. John Thornton, a bookseller from Chelsea.

One of the books then came up for auction in Gloucestershire last December and was sold for £47,000 - £11,000 more than Mr Thornton had paid for the entire collection! Various other books and manuscripts have appeared in sale rooms and have fetched a total of over £½m. Mr Thornton has since closed his book shop and retired 'to the country'. The sale of the books at such a low price has astounded antiquarian book-sellers who have described it as 'one of the killings of the century'.



Balancing the books

Stipendiary clergy in the Diocese of Truro were of course delighted to hear from their bishop in September that the diocese would only be able to afford a 2.5% cost of living increase in stipends for 2008. Bishop Bill Ind explained this was due to the rising contributions the diocese had to make towards pensions, as well as the cessation of grants from the Church Commissioners. Still, it could have been much worse if it hadn't been for that marvelous windfall of £36,000!



Copy for 30 DAYS should reach FiF office by the 10th day of the month:

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Celtic expressions

Andy Phillips suggests that the Church needs to adapt culturally to a changing society, and describes how he used this approach in setting up a Celtic Christian fellowship in Cornwall

Just over two years ago, I was posted to Faslane submarine base in Scotland, where I inherited a tiny Sunday congregation clinging on to existence. I set in motion a traditional visiting plan involving knocking on 800 doors and delivering Christmas and Easter cards with times of church services. However, after a year's hard footslogging, it became obvious this plan was not working – we only saw two or three extra people at Christmas services and we never saw them again.

A different approach

Turn the clock forward now to a year ago when I wanted to test the feasibility of setting up a Celtic Christian fellowship in Cornwall, similar to Lindisfarne's Community of Aidan and Hilda. This involves the risk of being ridiculed by my peer group; for unlike the evangelical tradition, Anglo-Catholicism is notoriously bad at cultural adaptation, having developed a concern that this will somehow affect the integrity of the Catholic faith. This need not be the case.

For example: the modern expression of Celtic Christianity is traditionally dismissed by Anglo-Catholics as being 'New Age'. What they probably do not realize is that the Celtic Church was entirely orthodox; it is just that its orthodoxy was of the Eastern variety because of its origins (and we all too easily forget the Orthodox Church is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church too); and despite efforts to create a popular myth by the disingenuous, there is no evidence it ever ordained women.

I emailed an outline of the idea to a small number of contacts. About forty mainly unchurched people turned up to two early meetings, most of whom I had never met, such is the power and reach of the internet. They are mostly still involved in some way with what was to become Cowethas Peran Sans – the Fellowship of St Piran. It had taken a relatively small amount of effort to get a very positive result and I had learned a hard but useful lesson: don't waste time and energy randomly knocking doors – adapt to changing times and make technology your friend.

It must be pointed out that Cowethas Peran Sans is not an alternative church,

and never should be; it is intended to act as a resource for Christians, sustaining them in the churches they attend as well as providing an easy way in for those prejudiced against the institutional Church and of a very different culture. *It is all very much about the pursuit of holiness using a precedent from a specific time and place in Christian history: we seek to learn about the spirituality of the early Celtic Church, apply it in our lives and share it with others.*

Engaging with other cultures

One of the cultural challenges facing the Church in Cornwall is the growing number of pagans who are attracted by the stone circles and other Neolithic monuments here. There is no point standing outside mystic fairs protesting like the evangelicals – we have to find ways

Should the Church die a gloriously sacrificial death or live a positive new life engaging with society?

of meeting pagans part way, the modern expression of Celtic Christian spirituality being ideal for this. But things can get messy in fresh expressions of Church, with the ecclesiology and theology often catching up with the practical realities of mission.

The usual accusation levelled at what is being called 'fresh expressions of church' is that they are 'popularist', implying that popularity is somehow wrong. But that is the very point. Should the Church die a gloriously sacrificial death, embitteredly clinging on to its old ways, or live a positive new life engaging with society?

Should the Church choose splendid isolation where it is now or seek to be at the centre of people's lives where they are? Jesus turned his back on no one, sharing fellowship with pimps, prostitutes, quislings and revolutionaries; are we to turn our backs on a generation of young people simply because we will not make any effort to adapt to their distinctive culture? We should not be surprised if they then turn their backs on us.

The safest thing, of course, is to carry on battering one's head against an ever-hardening brick wall – there is no risk of ridicule involved; but the cleverer way is to go around the side of it. Society is changing rapidly; we don't know our next door neighbours; we are suspicious of strangers at the door; we make our friends at the soccer match, golf club or on the internet, not at the post office; we move house on average every few years; 40% of people have never had any contact with the Church now apart from occasional weddings or christenings; a further 20% have had a bad experience of the Church and are therefore hostile to it. Consequently, the Church is finding it has to adapt its approach to an ever-changing and more mobile society.

Change to survive

Almost every parish priest is frustrated by resistance to change among the people he serves; clergy may be less aware of their own reluctance to change. Much as we would like things to stand still in society, they don't. There is no point moaning about it: we have to try to adapt the presentation of the Gospel intelligently and bravely in these changing times while still preserving the integrity of the Catholic faith. In an Anglican Church which in many places is imploding numerically (accelerated, as we know too well, by the divisions caused by the ordination of women), there is surely no alternative.

In the August edition of *NEW DIRECTIONS*, Bishop Andrew Burnham prophetically said: 'It is the sign of a growing organism that new developments have to be acknowledged and provided for.' Believing that the Catholic faith in this land can only be expressed culturally in the traditional Latinesque way may well consign it to eventual oblivion.

The SAS have a motto: 'Who dares, wins.' If our Church is to survive in any meaningful manner more than maybe a couple more generations, it will have to show a lot more initiative and dare to take a lot more risks. But the failure to adapt culturally will be the biggest risk of all.

Cowethas Peran Sans
can be found at
<www.peran.org.uk>