

newdirections

October 2014
£2.50

 supporting The Society under the patronage of St Wilfrid and St Hilda
and serving Catholics and Evangelicals seeking to renew the Church in the historic faith

Boots on the ground

Tim Pike on pastoral assistants

Also in this issue:

- Priests of The Society
- Catholics for Messy Church
- More on the House of Bishops' Declaration

parish directory

BEXHILL on SEA St Augustine's, Cooden Drive, TN39 3AZ
Sunday: Mass at 8am, Parish Mass with Junior Church at 10am.
Further details: Father Robert Coates ssc on 01424 210 785

BIRMINGHAM St Agatha, Stratford Road, Sparkbrook (B11 1QT) "If it is worth believing in, it is worth travelling for" Sunday Mass 11am. Secure Parking. Contact Churchwarden on 07854 147412

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

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

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

BOURNEMOUTH St Ambrose, West Cliff Road, BH4 8BE. *A Forward in Faith* Parish, *Resolutions ABC* in place. Sunday: 8am Low Mass BCP, 10am Sung Mass Traditional Ceremonial, 6pm Evensong, 2nd Sunday of the month Choral Evensong with Benediction. Parish Priest Fr Adrian Pearce SSC 01202 911569; Parish office 01202 766772. Email: afpear2@gmail.com

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, Parish Mass 10am (Family Mass last Sunday of the Month), Evening Service 6.30pm - first Sunday of each month. Parish Priest: Fr David Wastie www.stfrancis-bournemouth.org.uk

BOVEY TRACEY St John the Evangelist ABC, *Forward in Faith*, *Under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Exeter*. Sunday: 10am High Mass. Low Mass 10am Tues. Parish Priest: Fr Greg Stanton ssc 07925 051905

BOWBURN, Durham Christ the King, *Forward in Faith*, ABC. Sunday: 11am Sung Mass and Sunday School; Weekday Mass: Wed 9.30am, Fri 6.30pm; Evening Prayer and Benediction 5.30pm last Saturday of month; Parish Priest: Fr John Livesley ssc 01388 814817

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.stchads.dial.pipex.com

BRIDPORT St Swithun *Resolutions ABC*. Sunday: Low Mass 8am; Sung Mass 9.30am, Evening Prayer and Benediction second Sunday 6pm. Weekday Masses: Thur 10am. Enquiries should be made to the Churchwarden. Tel 01308 425375.

BRIGHTON WAGNER GROUP The Annunciation (11am) Fr Michael Wells 01273 681431. **St Bartholomew's** (11am) Fr David Clues 01273 620491. **St Martin's** (10am) Fr Trevor Buxton 01273 604687. **St Michael's** (10.30am) Fr Robert Fayers 01273 727362. **St Patrick's** (10.30am) Fr Steven Underdown 01273 747889. **St Paul's** (11am) Fr Robert Fayers 01273 727362. (Sunday Principal Mass times in brackets.)

BRISTOL Christ Church, Broad Street, Old City Centre BS1 2EJ *Resolutions ABC*. Sunday 11am Choral Eucharist, 6.30pm Choral Evensong with Anthem and Sermon. Georgian gem, Prayer Book services, robed men and boys' choir, Renatus Harris organ. Tues, Thurs and major holy days: 1.05pm Eucharist. Regular recitals and concerts (see website). During Interregnum contact

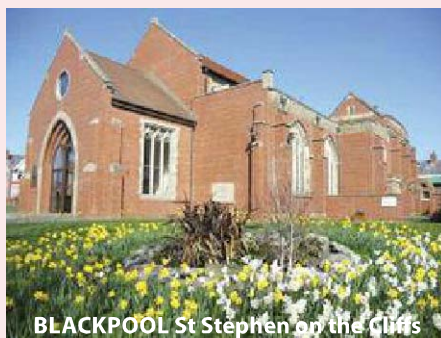
Roger Metcalfe, Churchwarden on 01275 332851 www.christchurchcitybristol.org

BROMLEY St George, Bickley Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Sung Mass 10.30am. Daily Masses: Tues 9.30am, Wed 10am, Thurs 10am, 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 **St Mary**, Bute Street Sunday: Solemn Mass 11am; **St Dyfrig** and **St Samson**, Pentre Gardens Sunday: Solemn Mass 9.30am. Parish Priest: Fr Graham Francis 02920 487777. Associate Priest: Fr David Morris 029 2221 2177

CHARD The Good Shepherd, Furnham. *Resolutions ABC* Sunday: Sung Mass 9.45am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction (3rd Sunday only) 6pm. Weekday Masses: Tues 10am, Wed 6.30pm (with Healing and Reconciliation on the 4th Wed of the month). Contact: Fr Jeff Williams 01460 419527 www.churchofthegoodshepherd-chard.weebly.com

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



CHOPWELL Saint John the Evangelist NE17 7AN *Forward in Faith* Parish ABC. Sunday - Sung Mass 10am. Daily Office & Mass as displayed. Parish Priest: Fr Paul R Murray ssc 01207 561248 p.r.murray@durham.anglican.org

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

CROYDON S Michael & All Angels, Poplar Walk. *Fif ABC*. Sunday: Low Mass 8.00am, Family Mass 9.30am, High Mass 11.00am, Evensong & Benediction 3.30pm. Daily Mass Mon - Fri 12.30pm, also Wed 7.30am. Sat 11.00am. Fr Ian Brothwood 020 8686 9343

DEVIZES St Peter's, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire *Fif Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Exeter*. All *resolutions passed*. Sunday: 10am Sung Mass. Wednesday - 7pm Low Mass. Third Thursday in the Month 10am Low Mass. Mass on major festivals & Saints' Days - times vary. Contact during interregnum: Mrs. J. Hosie, Churchwarden 01 380 813500

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.stsavioursseastbourne.org.uk

FOLKESTONE Kent, St Peter on the East Cliff ABC, *A Forward in Faith* Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: 8am Low Mass, 10.30am Solemn Mass. Weekdays - Low Mass: Tues 7pm, Thur 12 noon. Contact Father David Adlington or Father David Goodburn ssc - tel: 01303

254472 www.stpeterschurchfolkestone.org.uk
e-mail: stpetersfolk@yahoo.co.uk

GRIMSBY St Augustine, Legsby Avenue Lovely Grade II Church by Sir Charles Nicholson. *A Forward in Faith* Parish under Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: Parish Mass 9.45am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction 6pm (First Sunday). Weekday Mass: Wed 9.30am. Parish Priest: Fr Martin 07736 711360

HARTLEPOOL St Oswald's, Brougham Terrace. *A Forward in Faith* Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. 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). ABC, *Fif*. The Church on the Green. Visit us on the way to Walsingham. Mass on Sundays and Wednesdays at 10am. Linked to the Shrine of OLW. Parish Priest: Fr Lockett ssc 01328 820030

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. Wed, 7pm Exposition, 8pm Mass. First Sat of the month, 11.15am Mass of Our Lady of Walsingham. For further information phone Fr Martin Hislop: Parish Office 020 8974 8079 www.stlukeskingston.co.uk

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

LIVERPOOL St Agnes and St Pancras, Toxteth Park (*Fif & ABC*) Sunday: Parish Mass 10am; Solemn Evensong and Benediction 6.30pm. Daily Mass. Sunday School. Glorious J L Pearson Church, with modern catholic worship, good music and friendly atmosphere. Parish Priest: Canon Christopher Cook ssc 0151 733 1742 www.stagnes.org.uk

LONDON-HEATHROW-HANWORTH TW13 St George, Hanworth Park, Feltham, TW13 7QF *Beautiful and historic Church. Traditional worship. Vibrant parish social life - ABC Fulham Jurisdiction*. Sunday: 8am Low Mass (English Missal), 10am High Mass (Traditional), 6pm Evensong and Latin Benediction (first Sunday of the Month). Low Mass 10am Tues and Thurs. Fr Paul Williamson: 0208 844 0475. Email: 1stewart1@live.co.uk

LONDON E1W St Peter's, London Docks *A Forward in Faith* parish in the Fulham Bishopric. Sunday 8am Mass. 10am Solemn Mass Daily Mass and Offices. Father T E Jones ssc 020 7481 2985 www.stpeterslondon docks.org.uk

LONDON EC3 St Magnus the Martyr, Lower Thames Street (nearest Tube: Monument or Bank) *Resolutions ABC*. Mass: Sunday 11am, refreshments following. Tues, Wed, Thur and Fri 12.30. Visitors very welcome. www.stmagnusmartyr.org.uk Fr Philip Warner rector@stmagnusmartyr.org.uk

LONDON N1 Holy Trinity, Hoxton Sunday: 10am Parish Mass and Sunday School. Midweek Services: contact Fr Andrew Newcombe 020 7253 4796

LONDON N21 Holy Trinity, Winchmore Hill. *A Forward in Faith*, *Resolution A, B & C*, modern catholic parish. Sunday: Every Sunday: Said Mass 9.00am and Sung Mass 10.30am with Junior Church. Weekdays: Tues to Fri 12 noon Angelus and Mass. Saturday Mass 10am. For the Sacrament of Reconciliation and other enquires contact Fr Richard Bolton at rdeb2010@btinternet.com or phone 0208 364 1583

LONDON NW9 Kingsbury St Andrew *A Fif Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham* Sunday: Sung Mass 10am; , Thursday Said Mass 10am. Tube to Wembley Park then 83 Bus to Church Lane Churchwarden: 020 8205 7447

LONDON SE11 4BB St Agnes Kennington Park, St Agnes Place - 8 minutes walk from both Kennington and the Oval tube stations (Northern line) ABC/Fif. Sunday: 10am Solemn Mass. Daily Mass: Mon 10am; Tues 5.30pm; Wed 10am; Thu 5.30pm; Fri 10am - Bible Study after Mass on Wed. saintagneskenningtonpark.co.uk 020 7820 8050 frpaulensor@btconnect.com

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

Courtesy of Additional Curates Society

The Feast of the Translation of the Relics of St Cuthbert

The Rt Revd Norman Banks reflects on the calmness and assurance that St Cuthbert brought wherever he went

From the First Letter of St Peter:
‘Humble yourselves under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.’

Sense of peace

No one knows the reason why! But of all places a life-size copy of the wall painting of St Cuthbert here in Durham Cathedral, hangs on the west wall of All Saints East Barsham, the church which in the Middle Ages marked the boundary of the Holy Domain of our Lady in Walsingham, in Norfolk.

And it was there week by week that St Cuthbert looked down upon me and the tiny congregation that worships in a very obscure Norfolk Church. I think Cuthbert would have liked East Barsham Church. Unpretentious, crumbly, and largely ignored by those who rush past in cars and coaches on their way to Mary’s shrine. But if you do find yourself in that little church, what overwhelms is a sense of peace and calm.

And I think it is this deep calm which crosses the centuries that is a key to a right understanding of St Cuthbert.

Biblical echoes

In preparing for this evening’s celebration, I naturally took down from my bookshelves St Bede’s account of the blessed saint in his Ecclesiastical History and also his biography of St Cuthbert.

I was struck as ever by the beautiful and sensitive way in which Bede tells the life of one of Northumbria’s best loved saints, and by how in the autobiography each important event in Cuthbert’s life echoes stories from the Bible, as Cuthbert is fed by an eagle, draws water from hidden springs, cures the sick and stills storms at sea. What we discover time after time is that at the heart of this man of God, there is a stillness which both attracts and encourages bringing with it quiet assurance and confidence.

Ideal man of God

Cuthbert lived in hard and turbulent times, where people lived in fear and constant danger, not only from opposing tribes and warlords, but the fickleness of nature and the unpredictability of the seasons, disease and the dread of darkness and the spirit world.

Somehow under God, this man Cuthbert brought with him, wherever he went, a calmness and an assurance that

touched people at the deepest of levels. And those lovely stories of animals, otters, crows and eagles responding to his presence, with obedience and reverence, pay tribute to that inner calm.

Called from solitude

Cuthbert was a hermit, with a longing for the desert and to be alone with God. Although time after time he was called from that solitude to shepherd Christ’s flock and to minister to the local community, he always returned to the place where he could be most alone.

For Bede, Cuthbert is the ideal man of God, in following God’s will and, to quote Bede, living out ‘the faith that works

by love’, whether as a monk, prior, bishop or hermit. For Cuthbert walked for weeks across the countryside to bring the Gospel to poor villages and remote hamlets, weeping with compassion even before sinners began their

confession, available to all and severe to none, while in his heart never leaving the utter solitude of Farne.

Another way

This is surely why Cuthbert remains so attractive today both within the Church and far beyond. In a world saturated in noise and activity, in a society obsessed by possession and possessions, in a culture of the superficial, and a church ever searching for the new and the novel, Cuthbert offers another way. It is the way of the inside out, the city of God that lies deep within.

For it was on Inner Farne, in a circular windowless cell, largely open to the sky, that Cuthbert lived and died in the ‘City of God’ – a city he had first glimpsed as a boy when he saw St Aidan’s spirit ascend to heaven and which he fully inhabited when dying. As St Bede records, ‘he raised his eyes to heaven and stretching out his hands aloft, sent forth his spirit in the very act of praising God to the joys of the heavenly kingdom.’

St Cuthbert pray for us and may your calm, the calm which stilled storms, humbled men and women, and delighted the otter and the eagle, so quieten us, that with you, we may listen and hear the voice of the One who speaks truth deep within our hearts. **ND**

This sermon was first preached in Durham Cathedral on 5 September 2014

Cuthbert walked for weeks across the countryside to bring the Gospel to poor villages and remote hamlets

Priests of The Society

The Rt Revd Tony Robinson, Chairman of the Council of Bishops of The Society, explains the new arrangements for registering priests as Priests of The Society

Over the last two years we have gradually been developing The Society, under the patronage of St Wilfrid and St Hilda, as the ecclesial structure that will give shape to our life within the Church of England following the ordination of women to the episcopate.

Developments thus far

In 2013 the Council of Bishops of The Society began to meet residentially three times a year. There have also been meetings with leading members of the Catholic Group in General Synod and of the Catholic Societies, and meetings with the Retired Bishops of The Society.

A re-designed website was launched in November 2013 and a letter was sent to all those who had registered their interest in The Society, informing them of developments and encouraging them to support The Society by becoming members of Forward in Faith, which is the registered charity and membership organization that supports the work of The Society.

Earlier this year, with the agreement of the Council of Forward in Faith, we appointed Bishop's Representatives for each diocese, replacing the former structure of Forward in Faith Regional Deans.

Registration of priests

The latest development, beginning in September 2014, is the registration of priests as Priests of The Society.

One of the purposes of The Society is 'to guarantee a ministry in the historic apostolic succession' in which our churches and people can have confidence. Another is 'to provide episcopal oversight to which churches, institutions and individuals will freely submit themselves'. The registration of priests as Priests of The Society, under the oversight of a member of the

Council of Bishops, is an important means of fulfilling these purposes.

The Bishops are writing to those priests who minister in parishes that are under their oversight and other priests with whom they are in contact, inviting them to register as a Priest of The Society. Priests are invited to register on an individual basis, whether or not their parishes are in the care of a bishop of The Society.

Registration as Priest of The Society is about sacramental assurance and episcopal oversight. It does not involve acceptance of a Rule of Life. The possibility of registration as a Priest of

registration as Priest of The Society is about sacramental assurance and episcopal oversight

The Society therefore does not in any way diminish the important role of priestly societies such as the Society of the Holy Cross in offering priests a spiritual framework for their priestly life, as well as support, mutual prayer and encouragement.

It is intended that a similar process should be adopted in due course for the registration of Deacons and Ordinands of The Society.

The Declaration and the Register

The priests complete and sign a Declaration and send it, with copies of their Letters of Orders and (if they are not incumbents) their Licence or Permission to Officiate, to the relevant bishop. The statements to be made in the Declaration are minimal. Most are factual, concerning the validity of the priest's Orders, his entitlement



to minister in the Church of England, and his relationship to the bishop to whom the Declaration is made as a member of the Council of Bishops. There is also an undertaking not to concelebrate with priests whose orders are not free from doubt or to receive communion when such priests preside.

In response to receiving the Declaration, the bishop sends the priest a letter welcoming him as a Priest of The Society. This letter can be shown to those responsible for ministry in, and appointments to, parishes, to confirm priests' status as a Priest of The Society. It will effectively serve as a 'celebret'.

The details contained in the Declaration will be entered in a database maintained on behalf the Council of Bishops. For data protection reasons, the data contained in the database will be available only to the bishops, their staff, and the bishop's representative in the relevant diocese.

I hope that over the next couple of months we can encourage all those we know who share our views to make this declaration. It is another important step in our new way of working together as we create a new future for us under the patronage of St Wilfrid and St Hilda in The Society.

The Society is an independent, fully ordained body.

The purpose of The Society is:

- to provide pastoral care to all who are seeking and/or have received Holy Orders in the Church of England;
- to provide spiritual oversight to which churches, institutions and individuals will freely submit themselves;
- to guarantee a ministry in the historic apostolic succession in which they can have confidence.

Declaration by a Priest

- I believe and teach the Catholic faith as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the Creeds.
- I hold a licence in the Church of England or a licence or permission to officiate in a diocese of the Church of England.
- I have been ordained by a valid laying on of hands in the historic apostolic succession of the Church of England or a diocese of the Church of England.
- I am a member of The Society and I will continue to be a member of The Society and place myself under its oversight. I understand that I will continue to be a member of The Society and place myself under its oversight.
- I will continue to be a member of The Society and place myself under its oversight.

I make this declaration to a member of the Council of Bishops of The Society and place myself under its oversight. I understand that I will continue to be a member of The Society and place myself under its oversight.

in the presence of: _____ (name of bishop) and
in the presence of: _____ (name of bishop)

The House of Bishops' Declaration: 3

– Arrangements for Parishes

Colin Podmore looks at what the House of Bishops' Declaration says about parishes

The arrangements for parishes are set out in paragraphs 16 to 29 of the Declaration. Forward in Faith will be issuing guidance to parishes on passing Resolutions under the Declaration later this autumn.

16. The House is committed to enabling parishes in one part of the country to receive broadly comparable and consistent arrangements to those provided in another, notwithstanding differences in the culture and ethos of particular dioceses or the approach of the relevant diocesan bishop.

17. The practical outworking of the arrangements may vary according to local circumstances but the approach commended in the following paragraphs will, in the view of the House, enable all dioceses and parishes to act consistently with the guiding principles set out above and the requirements of the law, including the Equality Act 2010.

18. The responsibility for signalling that a parish wishes to take advantage of arrangements available to those whose theological conviction leads them to seek the priestly or episcopal ministry of men rests with the relevant parochial church council ('PCC').²

2. In the case of a guild church designated and established under section 4 of the City of London (Guild Churches) Act 1952 the responsibility rests with the guild church council and what is said in paragraphs 16 to 29 applies to guild churches and guild church councils as it applies to parishes and PCCs, with the necessary modifications.

Paragraph 16 says that there is not to be a 'postcode lottery'. This is a quite different approach from that of the previous legislation, which envisaged 'diocesan schemes' interpreting a 'code of practice'.

Paragraph 18 is important. In the Church of England the responsibility for such decisions is neither with the priest nor with the congregation as a whole, but with the PCC. Members of the congregation may be invited to express their views, but the PCC must exercise its responsibility and not effectively delegate it to a congregational referendum.

19. A meeting of a PCC to consider a motion seeking arrangements of this kind should either be one held under section 11 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 or one for which the secretary of the PCC has given members at least four weeks' notice of the place and time of the meeting and the motion to be

considered. Given the importance of the issue such a motion should have been passed either (a) by a majority of those present at a meeting at which at least two-thirds of the members of the PCC who are entitled to attend are present or (b) by a majority of all the members of the PCC.

The quorum and majority requirements are different from those under the 1993 Measure and the Act of Synod. For Resolutions A and B to be passed, at least half of the PCC members had to be present and a simple majority of those present had to vote in favour. For a petition under the Act of Synod ('Resolution C'), at least half of the PCC had to be present and two-thirds of those present had to vote in favour.

By contrast the quorum for resolutions under the Declaration is the normal PCC quorum (one-third), but the majority required depends on the number present. If two-thirds are present, then only a simple majority of those present need to vote in favour, but if fewer than two-thirds are present, there must be a simple majority of the whole membership of the PCC.

So, for example, if there are 20 members of the PCC and all are present at the meeting, Resolution C would have required at least 14 to vote in favour, but a Resolution under the Declaration will be passed if only 11 vote in favour. If 14 members are present, only 8 (instead of 10) need to vote in favour. But if fewer than 14 attend, 11 will need to vote in favour.

Another important difference is that Resolution C could only be passed if the incumbent or priest-in-charge agreed with it. The Declaration contains no such restriction.

20. The recommended form of the resolution to be passed by the PCC is as follows:

"This PCC requests, on grounds of theological conviction, that arrangements be made for it in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests."

A PCC which has passed a resolution should send a copy of it to the diocesan bishop, archdeacon, diocesan registrar and registered patron.

21. Parishes which have passed a resolution may rescind it at any time. The same procedures as are set out in paragraphs 18-19 should apply in relation to a PCC meeting which is to consider a motion rescinding a resolution. Parishes which have passed a resolution should review it from time to time, especially when a vacancy in a benefice arises.

The form of words is only a recommendation. Forward in Faith is likely to recommend a somewhat fuller text for the Resolution.

Reviewing the resolution can involve reviewing how the arrangements under the recommendation are operating: are they satisfactory or do they need to be revised? Having this on the PCC's agenda from time to time will also serve to remind people (and inform new members) of why the Resolution is needed.

Reviewing the Resolution does not mean that the PCC has to vote again. All that is needed is for a PCC agenda to include as an agenda item 'To review the Resolution under the House of Bishops' Declaration'. If the PCC is content with the working of the Resolution, the Minutes of the PCC should simply record that a discussion took place and include a distillation of the view arrived at.

22. The House recognises that the nature of the theological conviction on the ordained ministry of women which underlies a decision to pass such a resolution will vary according to the tradition of the parish concerned. Where a resolution has been passed, and before clergy are appointed to the parish or a bishop chosen by the diocesan bishop to provide oversight, there will, therefore, need to be consultation between bishop and parish to ascertain the nature of that conviction so that the resolution can be implemented effectively. The House will provide guidance for bishops and parishes to help facilitate these conversations.

A Guidance Note from the House of Bishops has been published. The covering note says 'This is...a guidance note. It neither adds to nor subtracts from the contents of the Declaration'. Any attempt to give it a status that it does not claim to possess should be resisted.

The purpose of consultation between the diocesan bishop and the parish's representatives is not for the bishop to attempt to persuade the PCC to modify its theological conviction, but simply to find out what the conviction is, so that appropriate provision can be made. A Conservative Evangelical parish might be happy with a male bishop or a male priest, regardless of who ordained him, but a Catholic parish will not be.

A Catholic parish will understand that in receiving the ministry of a priest it is receiving the ordaining ministry of the bishop who ordained him, and that if there is doubt about the sacramental ministry of women as bishops, there will be doubt about the sacramental ministry of those they ordain. And a well-taught Catholic parish will understand that a priest can only flourish if he is in full communion with a bishop and with all those whom that bishop ordains to the priesthood – a full communion made visible when he stands together with them at the altar. This will require the ministry of a bishop who ordains only men to the priesthood.

Forward in Faith will issue guidance to facilitate this consultation between the diocesan bishop and the parish.

23. Anyone involved in making appointments to ordained parochial roles, whether of incumbents, priests-in-

charge or assistant curates, or in exercising the power conferred by Canon C 8.2(a) to allow occasional ministry in a parish, should do everything possible to achieve an outcome that does not conflict with the nature of the conviction on this issue underlying the PCC's resolution. Where a clerk in holy orders is the registered patron of a benefice in right of his or her office, he or she should not limit his or her selection of candidates to those of a particular sex except in circumstances where a parish has passed a resolution.

24. In the event that any difficulties arise between a patron and a parish following the passing of a PCC resolution, the diocesan bishop should do all in his or her power to achieve an outcome that respects the declared view of the parish and protects the parish representatives from having to resort to their own power of veto under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986. The archbishop of the province should also seek to achieve such an outcome in the event of the right of presentation lapsing to him or her under the 1986 Measure.

Paragraph 23 means that if the PCC has passed a Resolution, an incumbent or priest-in-charge must comply with it when appointing curates or inviting other clergy to minister in the parish, regardless of his (or her) own views.

Paragraph 24 means that if a patron presents a candidate whose appointment would not comply with the Declaration, the bishop must use his or her power to veto the appointment in order to protect the lay representatives from having to use theirs.

25. In the case of multi-parish benefices the needs of parishes in the benefice that have not passed a resolution should be weighed alongside those of any parish that has when decisions are taken about appointments to the benefice.

Note that paragraph 25 refers to 'appointments to the benefice', not ministry within the benefice. What is contemplated here is that, when it comes to appointing an incumbent or priest-in-charge, the needs of parishes that pass a Resolution and the needs of parishes that do not pass a Resolution are weighed. With regard to ministry within a parish that has passed a Resolution, the Resolution will stand and those responsible are charged with finding a way of giving effect to it.

The House of Bishops' Guidance Note says, 'The aim should be to explore options that will avoid, on the one hand, a single parish being able to frustrate the wishes of the others in the benefice and, on the other, that parish being denied the pastoral and sacramental provision that the PCC has sought.' Thus, the House of Bishops contemplates a situation where the incumbent or priest-in-charge of a multi-parish benefice cannot exercise priestly ministry within a parish in that benefice (just as the diocesan bishop may be unable to exercise episcopal ministry within that parish).

26. The choice of a bishop to undertake ministry in respect of a parish which has passed a resolution is for the relevant diocesan bishop to make, again with a view to avoiding conflict with the theological conviction on this issue underlying its resolution. In all cases the choice should be made from among the male bishops who are members of the House of Bishops of the diocesan synod of that or another diocese of the Church of England.


27. As noted in paragraph 16, parishes which pass a resolution in one part of the country are entitled to expect equivalent treatment to that provided in another. In all cases the diocesan bishop should seek to ensure that pastoral and sacramental ministry is provided in accordance with the guiding principles set out in paragraph 5 above.

28. In addition the diocesan bishop and the bishop invited to minister to the parish should explore how they can best cooperate in a variety of ways to contribute to its welfare, resourcing and mission and in its relationship with the diocese.

29. The precise extent of the ministry entrusted to the bishop is for the diocesan to determine and is likely, for practical reasons to vary according to the pattern of episcopal ministry in that diocese and the extent of the bishop's other commitments. But the expectation is that there will be many similarities with the range of responsibilities carried by any suffragan bishop within a diocese.


Paragraph 29 says that the ministry of a bishop under the Declaration will be like that of a suffragan bishop (not like that of a retired Assistant Bishop who may visit a parish to do a confirmation). As the fifth Guiding Principle says, the

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OF THE DEDICATION OF
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Preacher:
The Rt Revd John Inge, Bishop of Worcester

Saturday 8 November
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provision is to be 'pastoral and sacramental.' That means that it will not only be sacramental but will involve responsibility for the life of the church. **ND**

Letters to the editor

Thank you

From Mr Colin Niblett

I would like to express, through the pages of New Directions, my gratitude to those that contributed to a leaving gift for me, which I received into my account recently.

I would further like to thank members for the many emails, messages and cards I have received since my leaving Forward in Faith and following the major spinal surgery I underwent shortly after leaving.

I am very sorry to have had to leave and it had been my pleasure to have served the Forward in Faith membership and parishes for the slightly over 14 years I was with FiF and, coupled with my employment with the Church Union before that, my 20 years of service to the Catholic Movement.

With my prayers and best wishes,

Colin Niblett
Greenwich, London

Parable

From the Revd Jonathan Fraiss

Thank you for Aidan Mayoss' words on 'Sowing the Seed' (ND Sept). I enjoyed his inclusion of the plough but I wonder if the point is overstated that (in the biblical material) 'the explanation does not fit the parable.' True, the attention moves from the power of the seed to the response of the soil but the four case studies are present in both parable and interpretation. Might there be a deliberate re-orientation from a story for the crowd about growth and harvest to the response for explanation which challenges us to be receptive soil (and ready for a variety of results in our own seed-sowing)? Such a switch is aptly introduced by Christ's use of Isaiah that many will be 'ever hearing but never understanding' (Matthew 13.14).

Revd Jonathan Fraiss
Bexhill-on-Sea

The Church Messy

Fr Philip North on his experience of Messy Church and its evangelistic effectiveness

‘Messy Church?’ That’s not Catholic is it? That certainly used to be my view. For a long time all talk of Messy Church made me cringe and turn the other way. For a start we Catholics dislike use of the word ‘Church’ without an article. It’s *‘The Church’* not ‘Church.’ And in any case what is all this talk of mess? We like ‘Church’ to be orderly, tidy, nicely arranged and properly presented. A Messy Church can’t possibly be a Catholic Church, can it?

Realization

Then quite accidentally I found myself at a presentation given by Lucy Moore, the BRF Messy Church Team Leader. And as I listened to her I was suddenly struck by the realization that Messy Church, with its combination of worship, arts and crafts and hospitality, is in fact a micro-reduced version of the Children’s Pilgrimage to Walsingham. I then found out that quite a large number of my Catholic friends have been running Messy Church for ages but keeping quiet about it lest they face mockery from their peers. And that was enough. We decided to give it a go in the Parish of Old St Pancras and have now been running Messy Church shamelessly and gratuitously twice a term for the past two years. We do it quite simply because it works.

Structure of the evening

As a formulaic package, Messy Church is very easy to run with a relatively small group of volunteers. The evening starts with the Welcome when refreshments are served and people are introduced to each other (though we don’t really bother with this part in Camden Town because our families are always so late). The next part of the evening is Activities. Four or five tables are arranged around the room each with an art or craft activity that illustrates the Bible story or theme chosen for the evening. The idea is that adults and children engage with these jointly and that during the course

of doing the activity, there can be shared learning about the Gospel.

Celebration

The third section of the evening is the Celebration. This is a time of worship, usually comprising a couple of hymns or songs, a short talk and some prayers. The evening ends with a Meal. Sitting down together at a table to eat good food is an essential part of Messy Church and is in many ways the reason for its success, so the most vital member of the team is someone who is prepared to cook without having much idea of the numbers for whom they will be catering.

All ages

Messy Church is genuinely aimed at all ages. Children remain the responsibility of their parent or carer and since the Church is therefore not acting in loco parentis, safeguarding becomes a much easier thing to manage. We find that

Messy Church is very easy to run with a relatively small group of volunteers

older people come along on their own simply to enjoy the company of the young. Volunteers do not require advanced skills in children’s work, and after a short time parents will happily lend a hand in running activity tables or even being part of a planning group.

Objections

The substantive Catholic objection to Messy Church centres around what it claims to be. Hard core Messy Church exponents will say that this is ‘Church’ for those who attend, that attendance at Messy Church is sufficient as an expression of the Christian life. For those of us who hold that weekly attendance at the Eucharist is a primary expectation of the baptized, this is a hard line to follow. As one of my clergy team stated when I first mooted the idea, ‘I just wish they wouldn’t call it ‘Church.’

Means to an end

There is no doubting the meatiness of this objection. But surely what it should impact is not *whether* we use a resource as evangelistically effective as Messy Church, but *how* we use it. In the Parish of Old St Pancras, we do not see Messy Church as the full expression of the life of the Church, but rather as a way of making contact with new people and enabling families on the edge of the Church’s life to encounter the Good News of the Gospel. Our ultimate aim is to draw people into full Eucharistic membership of one of our four Churches, and for us, Messy Church is a step in that direction. Already baptisms have resulted from Messy Church connections, new families have started attending our churches and we have recruited new servers and children’s workers. For us Messy Church is a means to an end, and not the end itself.

Stepping stones

In addition, if one objection to Messy Church is that it is not Eucharistic, that is very easy to address. Our second Messy Church each term is Messy Mass in which the Celebration time is used to offer the Eucharist. It proves what we all know, which is that children in particular have a rich understanding of the holiness of sacramental worship, for the engagement shown even by unchurched children is never less than profound and sincere.

A lot to offer

Coming to faith is a process. If our churches are to grow and Sunday attendance is to increase, we need to find stepping stones along which people can walk on the way to discovering to the full the transformative power of Eucharistic relationship with Jesus Christ. Messy Church, a resource within the reach of all but the smallest local church, can be one of those stepping stones. If we think about it in those terms, it has a great deal to offer. **ND**

Remembrance-tide

The Bishop of Fulham looks ahead to Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday, with their particular resonance in this centenary year of the outbreak of the First World War

When I was a schoolboy, it was seriously questioned whether Remembrance Sunday would survive. It was often argued that the machinery of the laying of wreaths at the Cenotaph and the parade of veterans should be abandoned; that the rituals of Remembrance Sunday kept us tied to the past, and trapped in an outmoded view of the world. It was said that the ceremonies meant nothing to the young, and that they glorified war.

Honouring their memory

Few, I think, argue this way today. How glad we should be of this. It was Henry Chadwick who remarked that nothing is so much to be pitied as a church which has lost its memory. What is true of the church is equally true of a nation. If we do not remember where we have come from, we will not know who we are. Remembrance Sunday says something vital about our sense of identity, our sense of mutual belonging. We do not live in a kind of perpetual Year Zero; we are bound together with our forebears and with our children, including those yet unborn. Our obligation to honour the memory of those who have gone before us, especially those whose lives have been drastically foreshortened in war, is all of a piece with our obligation to preserve for future generations the kind of society which has been nurtured in these islands over many generations, and which we have received on trust: one which is indivisible from its Christian origins and culture, however obscured those origins and that culture appear for so much of the time.

Something sacred

Few things speak so eloquently of that Christian character, that Christian *ethos*, than the institution of the monarchy, and the part played by the monarch in the national Act of Remembrance. The monarch is *both* the source of all authority *and* God's servant first. How

wisely we speak of the Forces of the *Crown*, reminding us that our soldiers, sailors and airmen can never be the playthings of mere politicians. Instead, that phrase insists that there is something sacred about committing forces to combat: that to send men and women into battle is so terrible a thing to do, that we only dare do it at all with that humility which comes from knowing that all our actions stand under the judgment of God, who is both justice and mercy.

Looking beyond war

Christian Remembrance is nothing without Christian hope: hope in the Word-made-Flesh, hope that *neither death nor life...nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord*. It is

Remembrance Sunday says something vital about our sense of identity, our sense of mutual belonging

the gift and virtue of Hope, properly understood, which preserves our commemorations in Remembrance-tide from mawkishness and sentimentality. If our Christian faith cannot and must not disguise or evade the awfulness of war, and the atrocities to which it gives birth, then our Christian hope can look beyond it, to that Kingdom where the Son of Man reigns in glory, whose birth-pangs can be felt even in this present age, and which, we are promised, will belong to all those whose faith endures to the end. It is this hope which alone can begin to make sense of the mystery of suffering: the suffering of the dead of the trenches, or of the family of the young soldier blown to smithereens by the land-mine, or the victims of the terrorist or suicide bomber.

The Christian faith puts suffering, innocent suffering, at the heart of its hope for the redemption of the world.

The suffering of Christ is unique, for in his suffering, God himself suffers in the human nature which he took upon himself at his Incarnation. Yet we must also say that in all who suffer, the suffering yet glorious Christ is present too, hiding the wounded in the deep shelter of his own wounds.

Unfailing prayers

And the dead? The holy souls in purgatory, among them the countless dead in war, are no less present to Christ. He accompanies them on their final journey, into the fullness of the vision and presence of God. At the altar, where remembrance and suffering and hope all meet in the commemorative sacrifice of Calvary, we plead Christ's saving death and resurrection for them, as for the living. This is the greatest act of piety and charity we can perform. We are called to express our love for all the holy souls, not least the fallen in war, by means of our unfailing prayers for them. In so doing, we help not only them, but ourselves also. As St Thomas More wrote in

1529, in the voice of one of those departed souls longing for heaven speaking to the faithful still on earth,

'For as he that lighteth another candle hath never the less light himself, and he that bloweth the fire for another to warm him doth warm himself also therewith, so surely, good friends, that good that ye send hither before you both greatly refresheth us, and yet is wholly reserved here for you with our prayers added thereto for your further advantage.'

Let us pray this Remembrance-tide: Lord Jesus, by thy merciful kindness, and by the power of thy holy Cross, grant the faithful departed a speedy entry into the Sabbath rest of heaven. **ND**

Boots on the ground

Fr Tim Pike on the benefits of the North London Pastoral Assistant Scheme

Think of the things we could do if we had a bit more time, or a few more people, or a little more money! This is so often the cry of the parish priest who is acutely aware both of the new areas of ministry that could be explored and of limitations in capacity.

This was certainly the situation we found ourselves in working across three populous parishes in Hornsey and Harringay. However, then a generous parishioner offered us the use of the upper stories of her house, and an idea arose. Working with another parish with experience of such a project, we employed first one, then two and eventually three pastoral assistants. Indeed the idea has now expanded into the North London Pastoral Assistant Scheme which employs eight pastoral assistants across three clusters of Catholic parishes in Camden, Hornsey and Tottenham. The ministry of each of these parishes is enormously enhanced by the energy and enthusiasm of young adults who are keen to give a year of their lives to God by sharing in the ministry of urban churches.

Hard work

Running a scheme such as this is hard work. The fundraising is a major task and young people experiencing ministry for the first time require a vast amount of supervision, encouragement and support. Pastoral assistants require formational and theological input and attention needs to be given to living conditions, finance and pastoral care. It takes constant attention to get the

schemes such as ours are now providing a steady flow of competent young ordinands

balance right between offering a challenging experience and accidentally taking advantage, and there are frightening stories around of young people who have been exploited by parishes who have underpaid, overworked and under-supervised them.

However the benefits can also be immense.

Prayer and companionship

I am in awe of those priests who can maintain the discipline of the daily office alone over many years. The presence in Hornsey of three PAs means that we have a pre-formed community of prayer which makes the Office a joy and which encourages other laypeople to get involved. It also gives a chance for the PAs themselves to be formed in the disciplines of the Daily Office and Daily Mass.

Ministry can be a lonely business, especially in an urban environment. Whilst the role of a pastoral assistant should never be confused with that of friend and a certain professional distance is necessary, there is no doubt that working with others brings a fresh joy and unleashes much-needed energy. With the constant questioning and gentle challenge that a person exploring ministry provides, it is also almost impossible for one's own ministry to become stale or complacent.

The companionship that forms between the PAs themselves is also important. These schemes are at their best when two or three PAs live together in intentional community in a separate house. In the context of this community, the PAs learn a great deal about themselves and can reflect on how they relate to others. They also form friendships which will last well into the future.

Growth

It is no coincidence that many of the parish churches involved in the scheme have experienced growth either in numbers or in depth of believing or in both. The existence of a pastoral assistant simply means that more ministry is possible. It means another pair of hands for administrative tasks, so allowing the priest to focus on other things. It means another friendly face at Mass on Sunday to help with the ministry of welcome. It means another person available to visit and offer



pastoral care. And of course young people attract other young people and so a pastoral assistant can be a focus for ministry to young adults.

The aspect of ministry that most young adults enjoy is that which lies at the fringes of Church life. Our pastoral assistants play a key role in the winter night-shelter for rough sleepers and other church-based community projects. They volunteer with external organizations such as community centres and the YMCA. They help out in church and community schools, besides much else. Not only does this provide excellent experience of urban ministry, but it also means that the parish can be in touch with more people and make a bigger impact on the community in which it is set.

Young vocations

Over the years the North London Pastoral Assistant Scheme has become increasingly focused on vocational formation and on preparing people for the Church of England's selection processes. The evidence-based selection process used by Ministry Division can sometimes militate against young candidates whose experience of the world is rather less than that of older ordinands. But a year in a parish soon provides the necessary experience. This means that schemes such as ours are now providing a steady flow of competent young ordinands who have had a rich experience of Anglo-Catholic ministry.

There are of course some disadvantages to running a scheme such as ours. Pastoral assistants are not 'curates on the cheap,' and they often

need to build stamina and require time to recover from new experiences. Moreover, there is always the risk that a paid pair of hands such as a PA can detract from the need to form and prepare other laypeople for Christian service. The priest needs to be sure that the PA is not doing work that could just as easily be done by a layperson.

Our parishes in Hornsey and Harringay are now unthinkable without their pastoral assistants. Members of the congregation stay in touch with those who have moved on and have gained great confidence from the knowledge that they have been responsible for a key part of the formation of so many young priests. I am sure there are many other parishes or groups of parishes for whom the existence of such a scheme could be a real engine for growth. **ND**

Most people involved in Spiritual Direction will admit that they find themselves, from time to time, completely out of their depth! They find themselves confronted with the experience of another person that they have no knowledge or understanding of. It is quite possible not to have the faintest idea of what might be offered by way of a response. But, out of the grace of God, a response does come. It is the same kind of 'gift of words' that Jesus prophesies for those who are persecuted and forced to defend themselves: 'words are given at the right time.'

It is this openness to the insights of the Holy Spirit that distinguishes Spiritual Direction from counselling or psychotherapy and any other discipline. Spiritual Direction is in essence an aspect of prayer – of being open and vulnerable to the working of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be taught or bought. There is not a body of knowledge or a set of skills that can be acquired. Either one has the gift of discernment or one doesn't.

This might sound rarefied or even elitist but it is nothing of the sort. It is my own view that this gift of discernment is distributed generously

Ghostly Counsel

Spiritual direction

Andy Hawes is Warden of Edenham Regional Retreat House

among the Body of Christ but it is not recognized. Among every group of Christians there will be individuals who have this intuitive awareness of what God is doing in the life of others. These are the people who can 'say the right things' or 'understand what I mean.' These will often be hidden, quiet members of a church. They will be trusted and trustworthy.

I am involved in training and supervising others in Spiritual Direction and it is often the case that individuals on the course have been 'doing it for years' without ever realizing that it might be termed 'spiritual direction.' These are people that have relationships that are centred on the life of the Spirit. It may be the case that they might have other interests that overlap with another person, but the key note of the relationship is that there is a liberty within it that places God at the

centre. This is the essential focus for Spiritual Direction. Some people are very gifted at putting God at the centre of things and are able to talk about the things of God in an accessible way. Again, most church communities have people like this – their membership is essential to the vitality of the Body of Christ.

There has been a lively debate for some time as to whether it is necessary to have training and accreditation to be a Spiritual Director. My own view is that for some involved in the ministry an opportunity to reflect on their experience and to review it with others is very helpful. It also helpful for Spiritual Directors to gather a 'vocabulary' out of the Christian tradition to enable them to express and interpret the experience of those they serve. There are indeed techniques in listening and some sound lessons about the practicalities of the ministry that can be learned. But, having said all that, if someone thinks that Spiritual Direction is about knowledge and technique, they are barking up the wrong tree. The Spirit is the source of our life, and it is the Spirit that must direct our course.

Lourdes, August 2014

The events of this year's Pilgrimage for the Society of Mary to Lourdes are described by its Director, **Fr Graeme Rowlands**

Our Pilgrimage for the Society of Mary to Lourdes this year had a very different character to it. Over the last few years it has become obvious that we are able to take a larger and more diverse group if this is organized once every two years rather than every year.

Available to all

We have tried to vary the timing of the pilgrimage so that is available to those who are only free to go during the school holidays. But this year, for the first time, we decided that it would be beneficial both to the young people and the adults if we were to take a significant youth group with us and, to make it easier for those who wished to go, that the Society would support each of the teenagers with the cost of their pilgrimage. To make the pilgrimage more readily available to all, we also decided to keep the arrangements 'in house,' without using a tour company, and to travel by train from London.

The journey

So it was that Fr Miller and his family came with me to Lourdes last year to investigate the possibilities, to plan a programme and to visit the Youth Village where that group would be staying. And then at the beginning of August, eighty-three of us met at St Pancras Station on the Sunday afternoon, those prepared to travel overnight, to be followed by a further twenty-five during the day on Monday.

The travel in itself was quite an adventure! Having managed to get everyone across Paris on the Sunday evening, it was for most of us our first experience of couchettes on a French train. The one thing which one cannot easily do in a couchette is to sleep, still less find anywhere to put the luggage! A fairly bedraggled group arrived in Lourdes just after 6.00am on the Monday, in the pouring rain and while

it was still dark. After breakfast and a chance to wash and change, life began to improve.

Youth programme

The programme had deliberately been organized so that most of the events were shared, but the youth group had their own programme, with games and discussions at the Youth Village each evening and a vigil at the Grotto on the Monday evening. While the adults explored the bars and restaurants of the

to the benefit of us all, the crowning glory was that they had written their own meditations

town on Tuesday at St Bertrand de Comminges, they went to the Roman remains in the valley and held a prayer vigil at the fifth-century Basilica of Saint Just en Valcabrière. While the rest celebrated a Mass and visited the Museum of the Shrine of Our Lady of Bétharram on Thursday afternoon, the young people visited the caves nearby.

At the International Mass on the Wednesday, they bought up many of the gifts at the offertory and provided an

English petition during the intercessions. At the torchlight procession on Thursday evening, they were the torchbearers to keep the end of the procession in order. And, to the benefit of us all, the crowning glory was that they had written their own meditations and led all the pilgrims for the Stations of the Cross.

A new vision

I hope we shall be able to do it again! I am, of course, grateful to our bishops and priests for leading the pilgrimage and for all that they did during that week. I am grateful to the adults and children who stayed at the hotel and formed an enthusiastic and devout group of pilgrims to the Shrine. I am particularly in awe of Fr North, Fr Miller and Jacqui who stayed at the Youth Village all week and bore the burden and heat of the day in caring for all our young pilgrims! But my main thanks go to each of the youth pilgrims in providing a new vision and fresh enthusiasm on our pilgrim way.

ND

**Forward in Faith
The National Assembly
will be held at
St Alban the Martyr, Holborn
on Saturday 15 November 2014.**

**Mass at 10.30 am:
Preacher, Fr Philip North**

Asking for asylum for Iraqi Christians

Chris Sugden calls on the British government and the CoFE to provide a safe haven for Iraqi Christian refugees

‘Convert, leave or die.’ Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Christians face this choice. Hundreds have been either beheaded or crucified. Many thousands have left everything they had in life and are living in crowded and temporary shelters. They got brief exposure in this summer’s headlines but mainly along with the Ysids who were trapped on a mountain.

Andrew White, the vicar of Baghdad, pleaded on BBC radio for Britain to help them by joining other nations in offering asylum. But answer has there been none. So far the UK has taken 54 refugees from Iraq and Syria.

Arguments for and against

Why? Probably because Iraqi Christians have no economic or political significance. Some within their leadership disagree about whether the best solution is for them to flee to other countries, or find a safe haven provided by the military might of others in their native lands as was provided to the Kurds two decades ago. The latter argument is emotionally compelling. Christians have been in Iraq for centuries and members of the people of God since Jonah went to Nineveh. The land is their home, their culture and their identity.



And there are arguments against offering asylum. The UK government has its own pressing problems dealing with seemingly uncontrollable

that would demonstrate the Body of Christ in action – a great witness to the Gospel

immigration from the EU. Others argue that providing asylum would do Isis’ work for them in removing ‘unbelievers’ from the lands they want to control.

Leaving home

In the pogrom against the Jews in Nazi Germany in the Thirties, many found refuge in the UK and other European countries. From 1930 it took 15 years and a global war to rid the world of Hitler. Western politicians estimate that it will take at least three years to rid the Middle East of Isis. In that time how many of the religious minorities will have died?

Leaving home, culture and identity is a huge wrench and not undertaken lightly. But God is not bound to nations nor by them. The nation-state as a concept is so nineteenth-century. The nation-states in question here are of very recent origin and look set to disappear in the near future. Moreover, God moves people around: he displaced the Jews several times; Jesus himself was a refugee to Egypt as a baby; and he taught that those facing the great tribulation should flee to the mountains. God is bound to his people, not to geographical borders.

Hospitality to the suffering and vulnerable is a Christian tradition stretching back to the early Church when Christians went out to take in and care for weakling babies and ill people left out to die.





What can we do?

It is not sustainable to provide supplies for the seven million displaced persons in the Middle East whom the UN classifies as refugees. Their aid needs are 60% underfunded, according to the UNHCR. It is sustainable to provide immediate shelter and a transit camp for 100,000 Iraqi Christians who want to

flee to the UK sovereign bases in Cyprus and from there be dispersed to host countries willing to offer them asylum (which the UK currently does not).

But what if parishes and churches offered to take in two or three Iraqi Christians each, for, say, three to six months? There are 16,000 churches in the Church of England, quite apart from

other denominations who so generously support the Christian NGOs. That would mean a handful per church. When I floated that possibility in our church at the end of August, three people immediately offered space in their homes. In another part of the country someone offered 50 places in their holiday park. That would livingly demonstrate the Body of Christ in action – a great witness to the Gospel.

Calls from the bishops

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the Bishops of West Yorkshire and the Dales, Manchester and Coventry have all called for Britain to offer asylum to those fleeing Iraq but have as yet had no response. Twelve further bishops have written in *The Times* asking for a managed exodus for the most vulnerable families to willing host countries including the UK. Christian peers Baroness Cox, Lord Alton, Lord Curry and Lord Dannatt wrote to *The Times* in September urging the government to provide such refuge and grant asylum. Councillor Mary Douglas, a member of a Pioneer church, and a trustee of the Conservative Christian Fellowship, writes: 'I pray that the Church in the UK will be foremost in opening our homes to refugees.' You could make your own point by writing to your MP urging this course of action and where possible making an offer.

And do we doubt that such people will bring the blessing of God with them? **ND**

This article first appeared in Evangelicals Now, October 2014

Christian 'exodus'

Sir, We urge the government to promote a co-ordinated approach towards the estimated 100,000 displaced Christians around northern Iraq/Kurdistan, many of whom have nothing but the clothes on their backs.

Their fate is now in the hands of outsiders after a forced exodus from areas they have inhabited since New Testament times. Western non-government organisations and churches are providing immediate aid, and the response by UNHCR, the Department for International Development and the British public has been substantial; however this level of aid cannot be sustained, and a longer-term solution is required.

Many of the displaced Christians and Yazidis have no confidence that a political or military solution will lead to their being able to survive back in their home territory. Many Christians are looking to find asylum in other countries. Australia, Canada, Sweden, Germany, France and others have proved remarkably generous but not, so far, the UK, despite it being a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and a member of the UN Council of Human Rights.

The Right Rev John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford; the Right Rev Donald Allister, Bishop of Peterborough; the Right Rev Dr John Inge, Bishop of Worcester; the Right Rev Andrew Watson, Bishop of Aston; the Rev Dr Robert Innes, Bishop of Gibraltar; the Right Rev Robert Patterson, Bishop of Sodor and the Isle of Man; the Right Rev Andrew Proud, Bishop of Reading; the Right Rev Jonathan Gledhill, Bishop of Lichfield; the Right Rev James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester; the Right Rev Clive Gregory, Bishop of Wolverhampton; the Right Rev Mark Rylands, Bishop of Shrewsbury; the Right Rev Geoff Annas, Bishop of Stafford; the Right Rev Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester

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