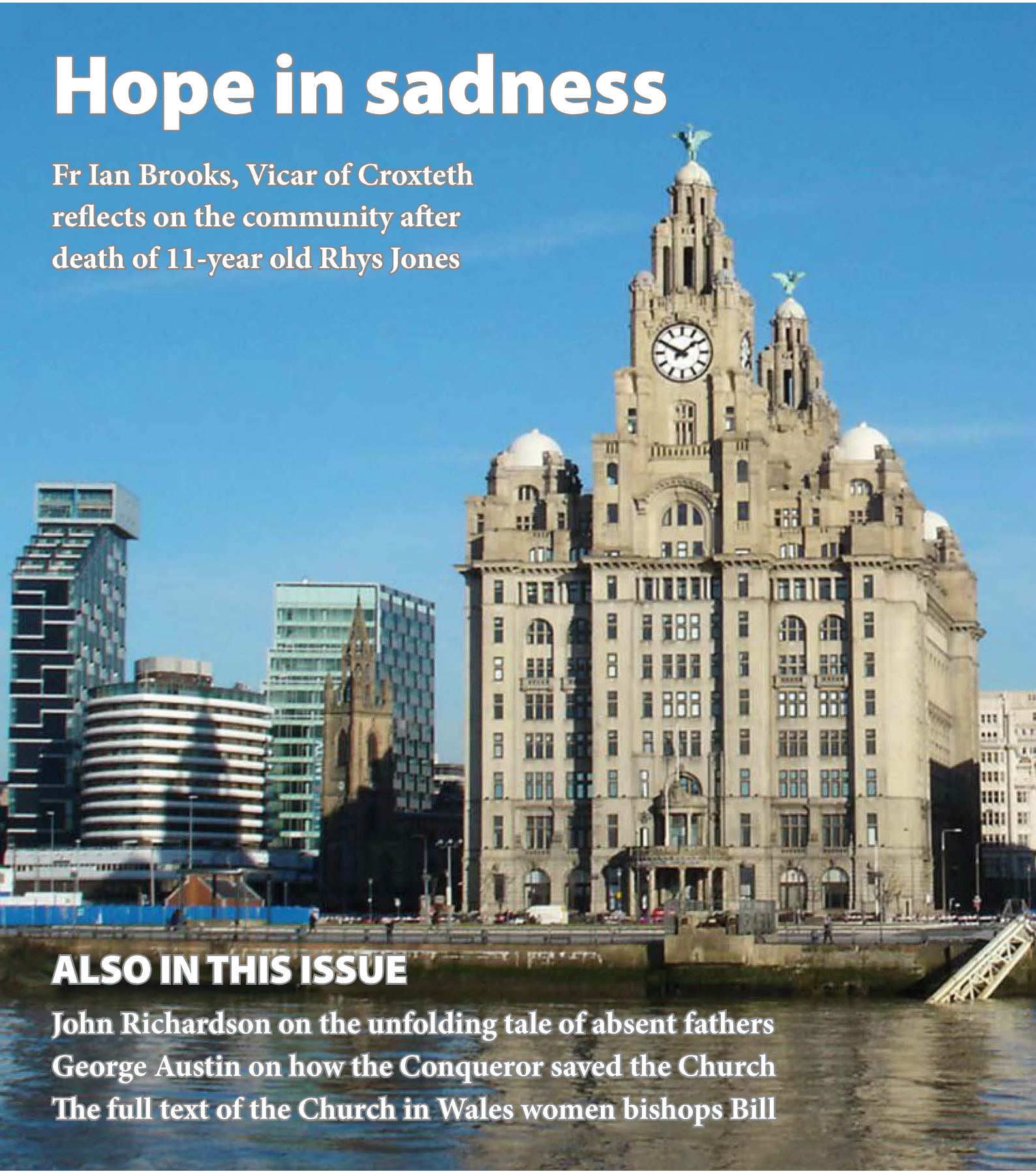
newdirections

October 2007
£2·50

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



Hope in sadness

Fr Ian Brooks, Vicar of Croxteth reflects on the community after death of 11-year old Rhys Jones

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

John Richardson on the unfolding tale of absent fathers

George Austin on how the Conqueror saved the Church

The full text of the Church in Wales women bishops Bill

contents

Vol 10 No 149 October 2007

REGULARS

6
GHOSTLY COUNSEL
Andy Hawes on the love of money

8
TO THE POINT
VIII Civil partnerships

11
DEVOTIONAL
Arthur Middleton on harvest thanksgiving

12
PATRICK REARDON
On the exorcisms of Jesus

12
SACRED VISION
Rosie Razzall on Spencer's St Francis

31
TOUCHING PLACE
Simon Cotton on Keble College, Oxford

30 DAYS	14
FiF UPDATE	30
LAST CHRONICLE	35
PEVs' DIARIES	35

CORRESPONDENTS

20 **IRELAND**
The Rt Revd Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore, reflects on an earlier visit made to The Episcopal Church and the emerging signs of an almost new religion

21 **CENTRAL AFRICA**
Caesar Zvayi Mangochi reports on protests about homosexuality

22 **AMERICA**
Bishop Jeffrey Steenson's letter to the clergy of the Diocese of the Rio Grande

REVIEWS

24 **BOOKS**
A Catholic Replies to Professor Dawkins
Frederick William Faber
A Glimpse of Heaven
Anglican Church Building in London 1915–45
The Cathedral of Saint Fin Barre at Cork
Speeches that Changed the World
1 & 2 Kings
Simply Christian
Leaves from the Tree of Heaven
A Life of Glory
Dictionary for Theological Interpretation

FEATURES

4 **LEAD STORY**
Hope in the sadness
Fr Ian Brooks
Vicar of Croxteth for the past twenty-seven years, reflects on the community and its reaction to the as yet unsolved murder of 11-year-old Rhys Jones, and finds more signs of hope than are apparent in most media reports



6
Bishops trial run
The full text of the new Church of Wales Bill to enable women bishops

7
Disappearing fathers
John Richardson
In the face of growing evidence that single parenthood is linked with social deprivation and violent crime, why does the government fail to respond?

9
Impossible dreams
Jonathan Lloyd
mourns the passing of his liberal youth and the sad disappointment of the second generation lapsed

10
A common mission
Jonathan Naumann
tells us about Confessing Lutherans and the Missouri Synod

13
His trustworthiness
Thomas Seville CR
speaks up on behalf of Rowan Williams and his book *Tokens of Trust*

15
Head of the Church
George Austin
on the changing relations between Church and State in the eleventh and twelfth centuries

16
Of simple things
Margaret Laird
on the St Ives artist Bryan Pearce

17
Monastic fervour
Oliver Coss
on theological training at Mirfield

18
III The meek inheritance
Hugh Bates
on the third of the Beatitudes

18
IV The baptism argument
Geoffrey Kirk
asks if women can be baptized, does it follow that they should be ordained?

19
Resolution change
Paul Griffin
urges restraint on those who pass resolutions

23
Way, truth and life
Hugh Baker
on the making of a presentation of the Christian faith

31
The need for hope
Owen Higgs
urges us not to shy away from asking God for things

OUR SINCEREST APOLOGIES

There is late and there is terribly late. And last month's issue was in that second group. It was completely out of our control. The printing presses suffered a major break down and parts and expertise had to be brought in from Germany.

New DIRECTIONS
Founded 1993

2a The Cloisters, Gordon Square
London WC1H 0AG
tel 020 7388 3588
fax 020 7387 3539
subscription email
nd.subs@forwardinfaith.com
editor
nd.editor@forwardinfaith.com
all other enquiries
nd@forwardinfaith.com

Editorial
Editor: Nicholas Turner
Deputy Editor: Kathleen McCully
Assistant Editors: Geoffrey Kirk, Jonathan Baker, Simon Heans, Owen Higgs, Thomas Seville CR, William Davage, Len Black
Contributing Editors: Andy Hawes, Francis Gardom, Arthur Middleton, Gerry O'Brien, Barry Orford, John Richardson

Subscriptions
New Directions is sent free of charge to all members of Forward in Faith. Individual copies are sold at £2·50.
All subscription enquiries should be addressed to FiF UK Office at the address above.
Subscription for one year: £25 (United Kingdom/EEC), £30 (Overseas).
Priests from Anglican Provinces in Third World countries and students in theological training in the Anglican Communion will receive a free subscription.

Advertising
Mike Silver
57 Century Road,
Rainham, Kent ME8 0BQ
tel 01634 401611
fax 01634 306368
email m.silver@breathe.com
Classified ads rates: £16 for one month (up to 50 words)
£32 for two months
£32 for three months
Series of advertisements in excess of three months will also be charged at £16 per month with every third month free. Additional words will be charged at 50 pence for one month, £1 each for two or three months etc

The next issue of newdirections is published on 2 November

ND comment

America sneezed and we caught a cold. The lowering of interest rates by the US Federal Reserve in the earlier part of this decade helped us all in this country. What we did not know at the time (and nor did they) was that this lowering of rates would create, not higher inflation as was feared but, a crisis in the sub-prime market, as too many people were encouraged to buy houses they could not in the event afford to pay for.

Such is our interdependence, one with another, across the world, with connecting effects so complex that even the professionals cannot predict them, but only analyse them after they have made their presence felt. No man is an island, and the lives of each one of us has an effect on our neighbour, no matter how distant.

No sooner had we absorbed this complicated lesson in capitalist economics, than (again out of the blue, so it seemed) the Northern Rock Bank appeared on the brink of collapse. The Governor of the Bank of England had failed to act earlier because as he told us he did not wish to support bad banking practice. But because he did not act earlier, he had in the end, with encouragement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to give still more support to what was indeed bad banking practice.

The aggressive expansion of Northern Rock in the early part of 2007, for the profit of its shareholders and directors, relied too heavily on easy access to the wholesale money markets – bad banking practice, in layman's language. We saw, in spare economic rules, the extraordinary moral interdependence that we share. Actions have consequences, affecting and affected by the actions of others, however seemingly distant.

None of us knows where the next surprise will come from; we merely hope it will not be too big a surprise when it comes. Perhaps as individuals we will now hedge our bets a bit more, curb our greed at little, and be less inclined to put all our funds into a single internet bank account, even if it does offer an unusually high interest. We have at least been reminded that risk is unavoidable.

Nevertheless, behind the regulation, behind the Bank of England guarantees, behind legislative proposals for further guarantees, we all glimpsed the vanished ghost of mutuality.

Mutuality was one of the great achievements of the nineteenth century, and its effects are still being felt across the world, even as its institutions continue to be dismantled in this country. In the ferocity of the industrial age, groups of Christian men came together to establish friendly societies, insurance associations, penny banks and building societies, for the protection of those without immediate capital.

Mutuality grew so effectively because it grew from the Body of Christ. That bond of trust could not have been called into existence by good intentions alone: it was taught by the Lord Jesus Christ. The obligation of fellowship, or *koinoinia* as we might now know it, was learned in church and chapel; it flowed from a Gospel understanding, something more substantial than a desire to do good.

Its power was felt in the economic sphere precisely because it did not arise in the economic sphere, but from a higher and more stable realm. Safeguarding the Church, therefore, and proclaiming its importance has far-reaching consequences, even in a secular society.

The connection with banking may not be obvious, but the trust on which that system depends derived from mutuality, and if this is to be restored in the long term (however slowly), the Church has its part to play.



As we go to press, the results of the TEC House of Bishops' meeting with Archbishop Rowan have still to emerge. Commentators are confidently predicting, on the one hand, a fudge which will hold the communion together (just); on the other, the demise of the whole institution. Meanwhile, in Central Africa those same tensions are being spelled out in microcosm. A Province with an indecisive archbishop, an ill-drafted constitution, internal personal rivalries and nationalistic divisions is dissolving before our very eyes.

At the heart are deep divisions about homosexuality and liberal theology – a British liberal is still printing letterheads describing himself as 'Bishop-elect of Lake Malawi' and an American-backed advocate of sexual 'inclusion' has recently been sacked as Dean of the Province. There have been two suspicious deaths by poisoning (one of a white priest with a distinguished record of service to Central Africa). Two bishops, representing the Episcopal Church and the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, are alleged to have openly offered the Province foreign money in exchange for the removal of discussions of homosexuality from the agenda.

If we are honest we have to admit that all this is no mere manifestation of 'black mischief', but a true reflection of the face of contemporary Anglicanism: the portrait in the attic. ND



Hope in the sadness

***Ian Brooks** reports from Croxteth and reflects on nearly three decades of ministry next to the community that saw the as yet unsolved murder of 11-year-old Rhys Jones (26 September 1995 – 22 August 2007)*

The shooting by an (as yet) unidentified teenager of 11-year-old Rhys Jones dominated the news for a fortnight at the end of the school summer holidays. Television, wireless and newspaper reporters descended in dozens to engage public attention. Through them, the nation marvelled at the courage of Rhys's parents as they allowed the great waves of Liverpool's natural heartfelt sympathy and emotion to embrace them.

Few of us could even begin to imagine the inner turmoil of emerging from intense shock and private grief to stand in a packed football stadium and lead the crowd in thunderous applause – at once a celebration of a young life, so full of promise, cruelly ended, and a gesture of defiance in the face of the armed gangs whose senseless feuding had cost the life of an innocent child.

the vigil of prayer in the local school and park and the funeral service in the cathedral with the local clergy and the Bishop of Liverpool delivering a calm, dignified and moving address

The media showed too what we witnessed at street level: the swift and massive police response, as extra resources were drafted in from other authorities and the search for the murderer and the weapon intensified. And then there was the focus on the vigil of prayer in the local school and park, and coverage of the funeral service in the cathedral with the local clergy, and the Bishop of Liverpool delivering a calm, dignified and moving address.

There were, however, aspects of the reporting that presented a distorted and grossly unfair picture of the area. The electoral ward of Croxteth, about six miles from the city centre, comprises two distinct communities separated by woods and a park with a fine house, once the residence of the Earls of Sefton. On one side is the Council estate begun in the 1950s St Paul's parish (called 'Old Croxteth' by some papers), and on the other side the much larger private housing estate begun in the 1980s, (often called in the developers' literature the Country Park estate), which forms the separate parish of St Cuthbert.

It was there, in the car park of the pub just in front of the church, that the shooting took place. The reporters quickly gathered that the shooting was probably connected with the highly publicized feud between gangs of armed youths in 'old' Croxteth and Norris Green (the next large estate on the bus route into the centre of Liverpool) and turned their attention here.

Televised interviews were staged not in the centre of the estate but on a derelict section on the edge, which is being prepared for demolition and redevelopment, giving the false impression of general decay and neglect. No one would deny that Croxteth has had a troubled history; but it does not deserve the media depiction of a community composed mainly of armed hoodies, drug addicts, vandals, and families with anti-social behaviour orders inhabiting needle-strewn menacing streets.

Built as part of the great post-war development to re-house people from inner-city bomb-damaged and slum clearance areas, Croxteth seemed like paradise to those who came from cramped inner-city terraces. Here, on the edge of the city, bordered by woods and fields, were new houses with up to five bedrooms, inside toilets and bathrooms, and gardens back and front; 3-storey flats with plenty of green space for children's play; schools, shops and a library.

There was no shortage of work, for here, too, were huge electrical engineering factories employing over 20,000 people, and offering apprenticeships; and a frequent tram service conveyed those who worked in the thriving docks. The City Council and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese both provided primary and secondary schools; a new RC parish church was built, and St Paul's dual-purpose church/hall was opened in 1958. Residents from those early days remember a series of weekend street fights between youths from the estate and gangs from nearby Kirkby, but relate how gradually the new estate developed its own identity and became a settled community.

The collapse of the traditional shipping trade had a disastrous effect on Croxteth. Jobs were lost not only by those who were employed directly on the ships and on the docks, but by those who worked in the industries that supplied goods and services. Fr Cooper, second priest at St Paul's, recorded the loss in 1970 of 5,000 jobs at the English Electric factory in the parish. Many capable workers moved elsewhere.

As unemployment figures soared over the next decade the City Council used Croxteth (as they later publicly admitted) as a sink estate. 'If they've got problems, offer them Croxteth' seemed to be the rule. When it came to maintenance of the housing stock or the school buildings, Croxteth was bottom of the list.

By 1980, when David Sheppard wrote to ask me to 'come over and help us', he described it as among the most deprived of all the parishes in his diocese, with over 80% of residents on some kind of benefit and nearly 60% unemployment. The Sunday Mass congregation was six on a good day. I was about the twelfth priest approached with the plea to 'build up the congregation and serve the local community.' After much thought and prayer my wife and I accepted the call and began the work in which, twenty-seven years later, we are still engaged.

Three years after our arrival the decline of Croxteth reached its lowest point when drug dealing seemed to spring up from nowhere. There had been a few reports of local youngsters experimenting with 'magic mushrooms', and some evidence of glue sniffing, which had been more common in London; but suddenly there were gangs of 50 lads on the street corners at certain times of the day waiting for cars to arrive for the flagrant buying and selling of drugs.

The police were caught completely off guard, and the community was bewildered and apprehensive. The press descended in droves and gave Croxteth the

title 'Smack City'. The usual sensationalist nonsense appeared in the worst of the Sunday papers, claiming that the tower blocks were full of wealthy drug-peddling pensioners, and publishing pictures of teenagers smoking or injecting drugs for which they had paid youngsters to pose. The damage was both immediate, as many decent families sought to leave the estate, and long-term, as a bad reputation is almost impossible to erase from public memory.

The community, however, has been purposeful and resilient. A strong Community Federation, committed local councillors, school heads and governors, and the churches, have led the struggle over two decades to recover the stability and the reputation of Croxteth. Funding has been obtained for employment and training initiatives, for the development of out of school work and leisure activities with children, for the formation of a Credit Union, for the care of people with learning disabilities and the social support of elderly and housebound people.

The City Council has handed over its local housing stock to a housing association, which has begun to reverse years of neglect, working closely with tenants and residents, for the regeneration of the area. All this has taken an enormous amount of effort, which has been fully rewarded in the positive difference it continues to make to people of all ages; but the recent tragedy shows that there is a small and dangerous group of amoral young thugs who are completely untouched by the accepted standards of civilised society.

Over the past three years there have been several incidents involving guns and local youths. We were horrified when we learned of the Croxteth Park shooting, but we had said for some time that it would not be long before some innocent bystander became a victim. The life of a young child has been taken, the life of a family destroyed, the life of a community deeply unsettled. One of my congregation said how frightening it was to stand at the bus stop and watch a hooded teenager cycle by knowing that it could be the one who killed Rhys Jones. The yobs must not be allowed to undermine the rule of law and destabilise society. There is a clear need for a greater police presence on the streets, and for the Government to release the funds to make this possible.

The Roman Catholic Church has visibly retreated from Croxteth, closing the building that had served the estate for nearly half a century when its congregation dropped to around 200 at the Sunday Mass. We are still here, but for how long with a congregation of two dozen, unable to pay what the diocese demands in quota? Is our continuing presence here necessary, desirable, or (to use the word that sounds the death knell for valuable services that no one is prepared to fund) viable?

In times of frustration and despair it is tempting to think that our being in places like this is a waste of time and money. Set against the heroic stories of the Giants in the Land which I put into *Forward! plus,* life in Croxteth seems hopeless. Fr A moves into the slums of Victorian heathendom and, against all opposition from protestant bishops, scheming Kensitites and rioting mobs, establishes the Catholic faith, has 50 people at the daily Mass and 500 on Sunday, baptizes hundreds every year, runs guilds and clubs for every age range, raises thousands of pounds to run schools and beautify the church, and dies revered by all, the streets lined with half the population of the city.

Contrast with Fr B who goes to Croxteth, works for 27 years to achieve 25 people at the Sunday Mass, weekday masses subject to cancellation because only one person comes if you are lucky, a wedding every three years or so. Get rid of him? Close it down? One of my predecessors, Fr Michael Cooper, felt keenly the loss of half his congregation as a result of people moving after redundancy in 1970. In ill health, he resigned after eleven years here in 1973. A note in the margin at the end of December 1972 reads, 'Up Calvary to Christmass, down Calvary to Easter and along Kidron to the next Passiontide.' I mentioned this to a dear friend who had been my churchwarden in London. He was brought up at St Columba's, Haggerston, where his father had served for the legendary Fr LeCouteur and been churchwarden in Fr Raven's time. He reminded me that those priests did not work alone. There were three or four in the clergy house, there were often parish Sisters, and teams of ladies came from other parishes to undertake visiting. Finally, he said, there were compelling social and economic reasons for the poor to belong to the various guilds and organizations where they were fed or clothed, educated or entertained, given medical care or assured of a decent funeral. 'Your task today is harder,' he concluded.

Even so, there is a sadness in places like Croxteth: often a sadness in ministry because of the pressure to be 'successful' measured in terms of numbers. But lack of numbers does not always indicate clerical sloth, indolence or incompetence; sometimes it is simply that the seed falls on ground as hard as rock.

There is a sadness in the heart of the community that longs for things to be better. A group of year 3 children (aged 7 & 8) at Croxteth Primary School produced this touching poem a few weeks before the shooting:

MAKE A CHANGE

Gangs do not care
Their bullets everywhere
We feel so scared at night
The guns give us a fright.

Illegal fighting dogs scare us
Gangsters throw bricks at our bus
Needles of death in our street
Dropped by pale selfish people we meet.

If we *had the power*
We would grow the biggest flower
We could make a change
And rearrange the bad for the good.

Kind people in new parks
Friendly dogs with quiet *barks*
Having fun in the sun
If we try… all this can be done!

The church must be there to respond and empower with Christ's passionate love. Only a church that is active in community affairs, that weeps with those who weep, can through perseverance and diligent faithfulness bring the message of the Cross into the daily lives of that community, and give cause for hope. Only such a church, which witnesses to the reality of the incarnation and the power of the Cross, may then rejoice with those who rejoice, knowing that by the grace of God their labour has not been in vain. ND

only a church that is active in community affairs, that weeps with those who weep, can through perseverance and diligent faithfulness bring the message of the Cross

Bishops trial run

The Church in Wales' legislation

We know already that there have been and will be problems introducing and passing a Women Bishops Bill in England's General Synod. The Scottish church paved the way for the innovation in the British Isles, but to little effect, either inside or outside of that province. The Church in Wales, therefore, seems to have been chosen as the better place for the trial run for the new legislation in Canterbury and York.

It is specially useful as it currently has the equivalent of a PEV for faithful Anglicans in the person of Bishop David Thomas. If they (the innovating majority) could simply remove this honourable safeguard and assurance, without putting anything else of substance in its place, how much easier would it then be to do the same in the bigger province.

New Directions will return to further consideration of this inadequate piece of legislation in later issues. For the present, we publish the Bill in full. It has been sent to all members of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales. Bishop David Thomas' response can be read on <www.credocymru.co.uk/home/bill0707-1.html>

WHEREAS the Law and Constitution of the Church in Wales has hitherto not permitted women to be ordained as Bishops.

AND WHEREAS it is now appropriate in the Church in Wales that women may be ordained as Bishops.

AND WHEREAS the Church in Wales is mindful both of the provisions of the civil law relating to discrimination upon the basis of gender and of the need to provide pastoral care and support for those who in conscience object to the ordination of women as Bishops.

BE IT HEREBY ENACTED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Henceforth in the Church in Wales men and women may be ordained as Bishops.

2. The Bench of Bishops will provide pastoral care and support for those who in conscience object to the ordination of women as Bishops.

3. No Bishop shall be obliged to bring proceedings before the Disciplinary Tribunal in respect of a cleric or other member of the Church in Wales who dissents in conscience from the terms of section I of this Canon.

4. For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that wheresoever in the Constitution of the Church in Wales or in any form of service lawfully authorised for use in the Church in Wales reference is made to a Bishop that reference shall henceforth be deemed to include any woman who may be ordained as Bishop in accordance with section I of this Canon.

5. The provisions of this Canon shall come into force and effect on such day as the Bench of Bishops shall appoint. ND

Ghostly Counsel

Love of money

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

'The love of money,' writes St Paul, 'is the root of all evil.' Money and the use of it is a vexing subject for the Christian. Jesus seems to have been deliberately evasive in his teaching about money; he refused to be an arbiter between brothers on the matter of a will, and famously declared that both God and the State should be given their due.

Jesus lived for a period of time on the charity of others and out of a common purse, but his adult life was probably punctuated with all the complications that earning and spending money brings; particularly if he was a self-employed carpenter. In money matters, each person must work out their own salvation in fear and trembling. This must be the case because every individual's financial situation is full of personal complexities.

It is one of those areas of Christian life where there are few easy answers. This does not mean that the subject should not be addressed and reviewed. Ignatius of Loyola suggested that there were three types or classes of people who illustrate three ways of dealing faithfully with money.

The first class believes that it is wrong to keep anything for oneself, that the Gospel imperative is to 'sell everything you have and giver to the poor.' The second is that one must make the best use of all the resources that one has (as in the parable of the talents) and therefore they are quite content to accumulate and keep wealth. The third is the person who day by day seeks to be a faithful steward of their resources and is open to God's will and the needs of others as they unfold.

Where do you fit into all this, dear reader? Does it make you squirm? There must be a good argument for saying that the third class of person is the best and most Christ-like model. This is certainly how Jesus dealt with people on a pastoral level. His response to the rich young man is very different to his response to Simon the Pharisee and all the other wealthy folk whose hospitality he enjoyed. Jesus himself was a recipient of charity – the Gospel tells us that wealthy women provided for him and the disciples out of their own resources.

Money is a hook that draws us to the heart of our conscience and into the complex forces that shape our will. It is one of those areas in life where we are called to wrestle with God and man. We are reminded by lobby groups of all shades that what we do with each pound in our pocket makes a significant difference to the well-being of others and of creation. This means that we must not keep money in our purse or wallet; we must place it deliberately at the heart of our prayers.

If all this sounds too daunting, there is a well-tried method of keeping God on the bank balance and that is the custom of tithing. Work out how much you have to spend (after rendering to Caesar his due) and then give one in every ten pounds to God – and that does not necessarily mean the work of the Church!

Disappearing fathers

*In the face of growing evidence that single parenthood is linked with social deprivation and violent crime, why does the government fail to respond? The Revd **John P. Richardson** investigates*

Is aspirin the solution to youth crime? Back in the early Sixties, the saying went that aspirin was the best contraceptive: 'Held between the knees, it never fails.' But what has contraception got to do with the problem of youth crime? Potentially, much indeed.

Many years ago, Tony Blair said that the UK government was to be 'tough on crime, and tough on the causes of crime.' Since then, statistics for UK crime show a mixed picture, open to various interpretations. It is clear, however, that violent crimes involving knives and guns have increased massively, as have violent crimes committed by teenagers, frequently directed at those of their own age.

In the November 2004 edition of *Cross-Cultural Research*, Dr Nigel Barber, a researcher in 'evolutionary psychology', published a paper entitled 'Single Parenthood as a Predictor of Cross-National Variation in Violent Crime'. In the introduction, he noted this: 'One factor operating at the level of families that has received surprisingly little attention in cross-national comparisons is single parenthood.'

Notable correlation

This, he felt, was particularly noteworthy given that 'Cross-nationally, in research on developed countries, single parenthood is predictive of homicides committed against children.'

Barber's explanation of this, as might be expected from his specialization, was almost Darwinian: 'violent crimes can often be considered a form of mating competition.' In support of this, he quoted sources depicting a depressingly familiar scenario from the United States: 'Thus, Daly and Wilson (1988) concluded that many of the homicides in the Detroit area that were officially categorized as trivial altercation homicides, in which two young men who knew each other fought to the death over a seemingly trivial dispute...were really conflicts over social status, which is an important ingredient in sexual attractiveness and reproductive success for men.'

Of course, Barber may be wrong. A correlation does not prove a cause, but the scientific method demands that any such correlation may reasonably claim to be a candidate for causality, even if the mechanism is not yet identified.

This was the case with smoking and lung cancer in the Fifties. The correlation was relatively easy to identify, though the causes were not precisely clear. Nevertheless, the public were soon being warned of the danger and encouraged to give up smoking for the sake of their health.

The fatherless family

Surely, natural caution would suggest the same approach with regard to what Rebecca O'Neill in a 2002 paper calls 'The Fatherless Family'? She cites over a hundred sources to support her conclusion that 'For many mothers, fathers and children, the 'fatherless family' has meant poverty, emotional heartache, ill health, lost opportunities, and a lack of stability.'

the notion that sexual activity properly belonged within marriage has almost evaporated

Among the findings she notes are that children living without their biological fathers 'are more likely to show hostility to adults and other children, and be destructive of belongings.' They are also more likely to offend, to take drugs and to play truant. Depressingly, she observes that, 'In focus group discussions, young people in prisons spoke frequently about disruption in their family lives and about their fathers' absence. One discussion went as follows: Interviewer: *I've just realised we've spent the whole time and nobody's talked about dads.* Teenager 1: *That's because there's no dads to talk about!*' [p. 8].

In the case of teen crime, however, it is possible not merely to establish a correlation with this absence of fathers, but to propose a causal connection.

Before artificial contraception became widely available, sexual activity, whether casual or committed, was inclined to work 'as nature intended' and result in children. At the same time, children born out of wedlock were stigmatized as illegitimate and their mothers as immoral (nor did the fathers, if known, escape public disapproval). Taken together, therefore, these factors were a major disincentive to sex outside marriage.

Correspondingly, knowing that the only socially approved context for sexual expression was marriage, young men were encouraged to marry, not only for the comforts it would provide but – crucially – for the sexual activity it would allow.

But marriage required certain practical provisions. It was prudent to have finished one's education (and of course marriage was not legally possible for those of school age). Knowing that children would probably arrive within the first few years, it was also necessary to have a reasonable income and somewhere to live – preferably not with the wife's parents!

Changing social norms

Thus Jane Austen was only half right when she said, 'a man in possession of a large fortune must be in search of a wife.' It was also true that a man in search of a wife had to be in possession of at least some fortune of his own. 'Settling down' was not just the nature of, but the prerequisite for, marriage.

All this encouraged maturing boys to think of work, saving and, most importantly, personal commitment to a partner and to eventual fatherhood, as the social norm. Most importantly, the sexual drive itself, instead of being given license to run free, was actually harnessed to creating the conditions conducive to a stable social fabric.

Since the Sixties, however, this incentive has steadily declined. In particular, the notion that sexual activity properly belonged within marriage has almost evaporated. This is not merely the accidental result of the advent of the contraceptive pill. On the contrary, successive government-sponsored policies and educational movements since the Seventies have not only taught the young in detail how to engage in sexual activity, but have encouraged them to believe that the deciding factor as to when and whether this should take place is their own feelings.

When it comes to the right time to have sex, children are not taught to ask, 'When do you think you would be ready to marry and raise a family?', but 'When do you feel sex would be right for you?'

The result has been a predictable, and predicted, disaster. As E.S. Williams has shown in *Lessons in Depravity: the History of Sex Education in the UK, 1918–2002*, despite many warnings, sex education programmes and the accompanying availability of contraception has correlated with increasing rates of abortion, teenage pregnancy and under-age sex.

Government inertia

Now we are confronted with evidence that single parenthood in general, and absent fathers in particular, cause social disadvantage, linked not only with material deprivation but criminality and violence – evidence so compelling that even politicians are beginning to acknowledge the link. Given these facts, the prevailing sexual morality, together with the behaviours it produces and the outcomes which result, ought surely to be under consideration as one of the 'causes of crime'. Yet, on the contrary, among policy makers there seems to be an aversion to confronting this issue. As Steven Malanga writes in the online *City Journal*: 'The starkness of these statistics makes it astonishing that our politicians and policy makers ignore the subject of single parenthood, as if it were outside the realm of civic discourse. And our religious leaders, who once preached against such behaviour, now also largely avoid the issue, even as they call for prayer vigils and organize stop-the-violence campaigns.'

Why, then, do governments and social agencies not act? It is interesting to compare the inertia in this area with subsequent public policy in the UK on smoking. Not only has the present government now passed legislation making smoking in any 'covered public space' illegal, it has made the owners of those spaces responsible for its enforcement. At a stroke, it has criminalized a once widely accepted social behaviour and has turned the public into an unpaid police force.

What this shows, however, is that where a supposedly liberal government has the will, it can be decisive to the point of draconian. Choice in this matter is not an option. And the justification is clear: smoking is now, finally, acknowledged to be bad for the individual and detrimental to society.

what is needed, bluntly, is a return to modesty, to lower the emotional pressure on young people

Yet the same could already be argued regarding single parenthood and fatherless families. And if we believe at all in government – which it must be presumed that at least MPs and their cohorts do – then it is surely incumbent on those in power to pursue vigorously those policies which are conducive to the common good. That this is not happening cannot be explained by ignorance or stupidity. Rather, it suggests a dogmatic commitment to an inchoate libertarian sexual ethic, just as invidious as the tobacco companies' ability to go on selling a product they know kills (and the Exchequer's willingness to take the taxes it produces).

The class from which policy makers are drawn value their own freedom to indulge, and the results impact on public policy. In the troubled parts of our towns and cities, however, the consequences play out very differently than in the circles of the educated and wealthy. On the street and in the housing estates, sexual liberation goes hand in hand with social chaos. Parenting, arduous enough in normal circumstances, is made vastly more difficult when fathers and husbands are alien concepts and peer pressure among teenagers is all. In such circumstances, what motivation is there for a youth to become a 'responsible adult' when social and educational policy, and public example, all tell him that the most basic of needs and drives essential to family formation can be satisfied at a whim without long-term consequences?

Teaching by example

What is needed, bluntly, is a return to modesty, to lower the emotional pressure on young people, and chastity, to channel their natural desires constructively. But those virtues must be shown as well as taught, and that is not going to come from our present policy makers (nor, sadly, from the Church). Our leaders enjoy the freedom won for them by the Bloomsbury Group and its successors. They are not going to abandon it lightly. But then they do not live as Martin Dinnegan, Danielle Johnson, Abu Shahin, Ben Hitchcock and Sian Simpson once did. Never heard of them? They were all murdered in the UK in June of this year. Their average age was sixteen-and-a-half. ND

To the point

VIII Civil partnerships

Most forms for a Christian job application (e.g. parish priest) will only have the following categories: Single, Married, Divorced, Widowed. I have entered into a civil partnership, which is private to me and my partner and my confessor. Can I /should I tick the 'single' box?

Your civil partnership cannot be an entirely private matter. A civil partnership is a declaration, albeit on paper, in the public forum, after public advertisement, intended to bring about public consequences (e.g. rights to pensions, succession to tenancies). Although these rights replicate, to a large extent, those which attach to marriage, a civil partnership is not a marriage.

It follows that (assuming that you are not divorced or widowed) you could tick the 'single' box on the basis that you are not married. However, the word 'single' can have a wider meaning. As a result of changes to the law made to accommodate civil partnerships, the word 'single' when entered in the 'condition' column of a marriage register means 'not married nor having entered into a civil partnership.' A priest (who is responsible for registering marriages at which he or she officiates) would be expected to know this, and so for a priest to tick the 'single' box on a job application, without qualification, might be thought to be less than frank.

The current standard Church of England job application form has the following categories: single; married; widowed; separated; divorced; remarried; married to partner who has been divorced.

If a person who had remarried were not appointed to a post and the successful applicant were a person in an undisclosed civil partnership which was sexually active, then it could be argued that the unsuccessful applicant had been discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation. The heterosexual has been asked to state his or her marital status and, in effect, been asked whether he or she abides by the Church's teaching on marriage. But the homosexual has not been asked about his or her status in a civil partnership nor whether he or she abides by the House of Bishops' Statement on Civil Partnerships.

Impossible dreams

***Jonathan Lloyd** mourns the passing of his liberal youth the wonderful decency of the first generation lapsed and the sad disappointment of the second generation*

Once I was a liberal, for I caught the dream; now I am no longer, for I have learned this dream is impossible.

Despite the aggressive certainties of those who pass for liberals now, I have never lost a certain yearning for the gentler days when I was young. Yes, we were amazingly conceited and selfish, but there was a charm and an optimism that is still attractive. What went wrong?

In the rapidly expanding cities of the nineteenth century and their accompanying social chaos, the churches offered a moral order, an education, a discipline that was immensely attractive. When hard work and moral commitment were valued, churchgoing was seen as a positive, socially useful activity. Who were the good guys then? Those who went to church three times every Sunday, and put into practice what they had learned there.

Open and generous

Times change. In a highly educated, highly regulated age, there is less immediate need for personal social morality, and strong discipline; in a time of great mobility and an increased diversity of culture, the social virtue is now tolerance. When the government does so much more to look after people, in their unemployment, educational need, old age and sickness, there is little call for those Victorian values.

Who are the good guys now? No longer the churchgoers, but the lapsed. The lapsed are those who know the Christian story, who were taught the Christian virtues, who were educated under Christian discipline, *but* who no longer carry the excess baggage of the Christian Church, the narrowness, the hypocrisy, the disapproval. Good, moral people, who are nevertheless utterly relaxed about divorce, abortion, gays, and so on; who will not preach at you, who are not uptight, who do not believe impossible things, who are not guilty by association of all the historical sins of the Church.

Many of my friends

Sadly, it is rather more subtle than non-churchgoers suppose. I would be happy, churchgoer though I am, to say that it is the First Generation Lapsed who win the prize for being, in general terms, the nicest guys. People brought up in Christian homes, who went regularly to church, became servers, joined the choir, went to a church school, who were brought up in other words within the Body of Christ, with every expectation that they would remain.

But that was the late twentieth century, so of course they did not remain. They were modern and liberal and moved to another town, and lapsed, and perhaps only ever went to church for weddings and when back with parents at Christmas. Many of my friends have been exactly like this, and they are good people – better than me. And then they have children.

They have children, and face the terrible question. How do you bring up your own children, when you yourself have left the Church? 'By bringing them up as Christians,' is the generally quite confident reply. It ought to work, and it is all done with genuine conviction and the best of intentions. This is surely why church schools are so hugely popular, why parents will tell if necessary lie after lie in order to get their children accepted. The understanding is there and the commitment is real – Christian education matters. And no doubt such children will have been brought to church for baptism. They are Christians but don't have to go to church to prove it.

The next generation

God's grace is freely given, and God-be-praised there are exceptions, but in general terms we can see that this wonderful, logical, well-intentioned scheme does not work. The Second Generation Lapsed do not live up to their parents' expectations. The Christian faith, even reduced only to its moral content, cannot merely be taught. It must also be learned, as though it were real, as though it were true (and this includes the theological bits), within the Body of Christ. It cannot be passed on second-hand; it must be lived.

it cannot be passed on second-hand, it must be lived

The First Generation Lapsed can look back, and without undue conceit say, 'We are better than our parents' generation – more tolerant, liberal, broad-minded, and with wider moral concerns for animals, for the environment, for third world poverty, and so on. Why should I return with my child? Why should I bring her back into the narrow confines of a declining church?'

How sad. It makes such clear and well-meaning sense that it *ought* to be right. It ought to be the case that the teachings of the gracious Galilean, the anti-establishment Son of Man, as mediated in the gospels, can be understood and taken to heart without any need for the Body of Christ, the Church. And yet somehow it isn't. My friends' children, nice as many of them are, have not lived up to these aspirations: they are not the generous, tolerant versions of Christians that their parents were; they are rather ordinary, moderately decent, utterly non-aspirational secularists.

Failed dreams

If it could be done, then the liberal dream could be realized. It would be possible to live the Christian life without reference to the Church. You may say that this can happen already, that there are many good people who never darken the door of a church. Of course there are. God's grace is freely given, and he does not need his Church to pour out his gifts on whom he will. But this is not the liberal dream – the gratuitous outpouring of grace.

No, rather, it is that ordinary folk – like you and me if you wish – full of good intentions, committed, open and generous, could pass on what we had received from the Church without having to return and be part of it, that we could bring up our children as Christians without crushing them under the weight of that ancient institution. We know that the historic Church is imperfect, inward-looking, obsessed with trivializing detail, burdened with out-of-date moral commands; we know that we would be tainted with its inevitable inadequacies.

So we dreamt that by our own efforts, and in the simplicity of our own homes, we could pass on the fullness of the Christian Gospel, the love and faith and hope, but with none of the baggage. But it did not happen. But it did not happen. ND

A common mission

***Jonathan Naumann** challenges some of the misconceptions about Lutherans and their attitude to the Catholic faith and sketches the particular witness of the Missouri Synod*

If you don't know that much about Lutherans or Lutheranism, you could be forgiven for thinking that Lutheranism is a 'liberalizing' influence in Christendom today. If you were ignorant of its history, you might think of the Lutheran movement as the result of a rebellious monk being followed by even more rebellious modern counterparts. As a Lutheran pastor in Britain in the Eighties and Nineties, I remember fielding comments from people who had heard that the Lutheran church in Denmark was pioneering homosexual marriage long before it was making headlines in the English-speaking world. And didn't Lutheran state churches in Scandinavia pioneer women priests and other things now associated with 'progressive' Christianity?

Now that I serve in a culture that knows a lot about Lutherans (Pennsylvania), I still have to explain myself when I say that I am a Lutheran who complies with traditional Christian doctrine and practice. I compare the situation to that of a dysfunctional family.

In a dysfunctional family, you can easily picture the children divided between compliant children and rebellious children. In the Lutheran family, the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) are the compliant children. We do not go our own way. We are interested in conserving the heritage of historic belief that has come down to us through our Fathers in the faith. We are loyal to what is Catholic and ancient with an aversion to novelties in religion. We are compliant to the Scriptures, however unfashionable the apostolic word may sound to modern ears.

Origins and history

Part of the romantic trend in the nineteenth century, that included the Oxford Movement in Anglicanism, the Confessional Lutheran movement also sought to revive the venerable theology of the past. C.F.W. Walther and others revived the almost forgotten formularies and writings of the original Lutherans of the Reformation era. The founders of the LCMS fled Dresden Germany for St Louis specifically in order to practice freely the orthodox Lutheranism that was being persecuted by more progressive forces back in the German lands in the 1840s.

Even in the sixteenth century, the Lutheran Church was far more conservative than any of the new churches that sprang up in Europe. Like Luther himself, the Lutheran movement was not radically reformed. The argument of the Augsburg Confession of 1530 was that Lutheran churches were faithful to the Catholic faith, even though they disagreed with the administration of the Pope at the time, Leo X, who had excommunicated them for their disapproval of his 'indulgence sales' campaign.

Unlike radical Protestants, Lutherans did not go about smashing images, demolishing cathedrals, churches and monasteries. Nor did Lutherans give the sacraments a diminished role in their spirituality. Lutherans always upheld baptismal regeneration and the bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The Lutheran catechism encourages private confession and absolution. Episcopal polity was difficult to maintain without the approval of the Roman hierarchy, but an ordained ministry served Lutherans through an unbroken succession of clergy, if not bishops.

Expansion and achievements

Today the LCMS is the largest of the Confessional Lutheran churches in the world. Originally German-speaking, most Missouri Synod Lutheran Churches use English, but some offer worship services in other languages. The Synod's website <www.lcms.org> highlights the churches' long history of reaching out to others. LCMS World Mission trains, sends and supports called career missionaries and appointed volunteer missionaries throughout the USA and in other countries. Ministry to African-Americans has been a solid part of the Synod for more than 100 years. In addition, our Library for the Blind produces sermons and devotional literature, and of the approximately 90 deaf congregations maintained by all religious denominations, more than 50 are members of the LCMS.

Well known for its emphasis on biblical doctrine and faithfulness to the historic Lutheran Confessions, the Synod also seeks new ways of proclaiming the Gospel. Concordia Publishing House is the nation's fourth-largest Protestant publisher. The Synod operates the world's oldest religious radio station, KFUO. Its programme, *The Lutheran Hour*, produced by the Synod's International Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL), has been aired in North America since 1930. The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML), founded in 1942, serves as the Synod's auxiliary for women and has been a leader in supporting missionary outreach in many areas.

Unlike many other churches, the LCMS has never been involved in a major merger. It is a member of the International Lutheran Council, but it does not belong to the Lutheran World Federation, to the National Council of Churches or to the World Council of Churches. The LCMS is in Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with more than 25 Partner Churches.

Sharing the faith

The Synod has always had a great emphasis on education. In fact, its earliest congregations built schools before they built churches. In the LCMS there are ten colleges, two seminaries, 91 high schools and the nation's second-largest parochial elementary school system. The LCMS has congregations in all sections of the USA, but the heaviest concentration of its membership continues to lie in the Midwest.

The Synod has built and maintains a large network of Lutheran hospitals, nursing homes, human care and adoption agencies to serve the sick, the elderly, victims of abuse, those struggling with addictions, and many others coping with difficult situations and transitions in life.

LCMS dioceses, called 'districts', assist its congregations in developing and fostering vibrant ministries to bring the saving, life-giving Gospel of Jesus Christ to people today. The district in which I serve is the non-geographical 'English District' – an unintentional tribute to my background in the Lutheran church in England, one of the LCMS's sister churches in which I was ordained 25 years ago.

As with many compliant children in dysfunctional families, orthodox Lutherans deserve more credit than they get. But that is a cross we bear, whether as Lutherans or Anglicans, in a hostile world carrying out a common mission to share the life-giving Catholic faith from the past into the years ahead. ND

devotional

Harvest thanksgiving

Arthur Middleton

Seasonal rhythm

When I was five, I remember a significant moment. It was a summer Saturday afternoon and I was standing in the street, anticipating my mother's news that we were to have the first tomatoes of the season for tea. At this time, the fruits of the earth could only be eaten in their appointed season; the absence of tomatoes for the most of the year made their in-season flavour all the more rich, tasty and significant. Today, their availability throughout the year has destroyed any sense of wonder and relish and can destroy our sense of the balance of nature, the rhythm of the seasons.

This hit me forcibly in Australia, where I saw daffodils growing in August. The same rhythm of nature's season is there, but the timing is in reverse to ours, so that while we are harvesting, they are now sowing. The availability of seasonal fruits in every season can make us blind and deaf to the rhythm of nature because it destroys the faculty of wonder.

Thomas Traherne

This is a far cry from the experience of the seventeenth-century mystical poet, Thomas Traherne. He wrote, 'The corn was orient and immortal which never should be reaped nor was ever sown… Eternity was manifest in the Light of Day, and something infinite behind everything appeared, which talked with my expectation and moved my desire.'

Traherne's meditations delight with joy in the things of creation, the rhythm of nature and its seasons because he sees in them intimations of eternity. In spite of the unseasonableness of the food chain, there is still the rhythm of the seasons which we can never destroy. We must not allow it to destroy our roots in nature, because, if we stop and look, we allow the things of nature to lead us into communion with something vaster, something infinite.

Life through death

Think of the caterpillar. It begins life from an egg in the restricted world of the cabbage leaf. Yet it has within it the potential to become, through the chrysalization of death, the more beautiful creature of the butterfly, there to live in a much larger world, taking with it all it has been as a caterpillar. There in the natural world of finite things is the intimation of something infinite. That is why we must not lose our roots in the natural world. Harvest thanksgiving reminds us of seedtime and harvest, the rhythm of nature. The caterpillar and the butterfly show us something of death and resurrection. The corn has within it the potential to become bread and, in the Eucharistic Prayer, the bread is given the potential to become the carrier of a real presence of divine life.

All these things express something universally found in human history, because it is part of the very stuff of humanity as we know it. A yearning for life, for rebirth, for liberation into a greater mode of existence – a yearning which recognizes that in some way life must be sought in death, the light must be found in darkness. The sun dies in the evening and goes down into the waters of the sea, to be born again when the night is over; the winter darkness succeeds the autumn, the 'fall', and the year dies to be born again in the spring. ND



The venue for the 2008 Lambeth Conference has been changed!

Being cool

Church attendances will continue to fall until the Church tunes into rap and pop culture. Imitating supermarkets is the way to halt decline. Two latest recipes for success from cool clerics.

New Directions won't be beaten when it comes to new thinking. So we're pleased to bring you our super-survey on why few choose pews. It comes with iPod-friendly headings. Tune in. Drop in or drop out!

Everybody's Doin' It – Innit? Going to church to keep up with the Jones' aint cool when the Jones don't know where the church is.

Ratner Rap Dissing your own product is a no-brainer as Gerald Ratner found out. Many modern church leaders haven't.

Location, Location, Location On the move moderns don't hang out anywhere long enough to get prayer callouses on their knees.

Posh 'n' Becks These icons are everywhere but everywhere, yet seemingly never in church. Maybe that dude Tom Cruse will get them God botherin'.

The Many Lives of Brian To make it as a comic, kick Christianity – but not Islam. No way. You think they're stupid?

Buy One Get One Free If the church thinks punters will keep buying all three of hatching, matching and despatching it's not on Planet Earth. Give 'em BOGOF at St Botolphs.

The Devil Wears Prada And any other fashion that persuades you guys that he doesn't exist.

Girls Aloud Church has always been the place for gals rather than geezers. With so many vicarettes now, it's like a karaoke powder room. No macho cred there.

Where Have All the Vicars (and Coppers) Gone? Time was when you could clock one of the Boys in Blue and Our Man from St Marks down your road. Now neither. Too much paper work? So many yellow vests around now that you don't know if it's the Sweeney or the Sewer Gang. Perhaps Our Man has also donned a yellow vest with PC Plod. That's if he's a modern cleric and ditched his dog collar and become The Invisible Man.

Candles in the Wind Flower-laying, ribbon-wearing. That's now the scene big-time.

Alan Edwards

The exorcisms

Jesus' exorcisms are not just a subset of his miracles – they reveal the reason he was sent

***Patrick Henry Reardon** is a Senior Editor of Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*

Not until our Lord, at his baptism, was identified as God's Son do we find the demons taking a distinctive interest in him. It was this identification, in fact, that prompted Jesus' first temptation [Matt. 4.3; Luke 4.3]. Heaven knows exactly what the titles 'Holy One of God' [Mark 1.24] and 'Son of God' [3.11; 5.7] meant to those demons, but they unmistakably perceived that Jesus was very special in God's eyes. Almost immediately after the Lord's initial temptations [1.13], the demons began to complain, 'Let us alone! What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!' [1.24]. Obviously they perceived that they were dealing with a spiritual power beyond their own.

Mark finishes that dramatic encounter by describing the ease with which Jesus expelled the demonic power, along with the response of those who witnessed it: 'But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be quiet, and come out of him!' And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, 'What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him" [1.25–7].

The Messianic secret

It was apparently this demon-expelling quality of Jesus' ministry that most impressed the onlookers, Mark says, because 'immediately his fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee' [1.28]. Consequently, just a few verses later, we learn, 'when the sun had set, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. Then he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons' [1.32–4].

According to Mark, Jesus several times imposed silence on those disposed to proclaim him as the Messiah [1.44; 5.43; 7.36; 8.30; 9.9]. Probably that prohibition was a deterrent to those whose ideas of a 'Messiah' were worldly and very different from what Jesus meant by that title.

Whatever the purpose of the messianic secret, nonetheless, it is significant that Jesus first imposed it on the demons. With respect to those original exorcisms, Mark says, 'he did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew him' [1.34]. And somewhat later, he writes, 'And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw him, fell down before him and cried out, saying, 'You are the Son of God.' But he sternly warned them that they should not make him known' [3.11–12]. If the human witnesses were prone to spread a false report about the identity and mission of Jesus, how much more the demons!

Purpose of the Incarnation

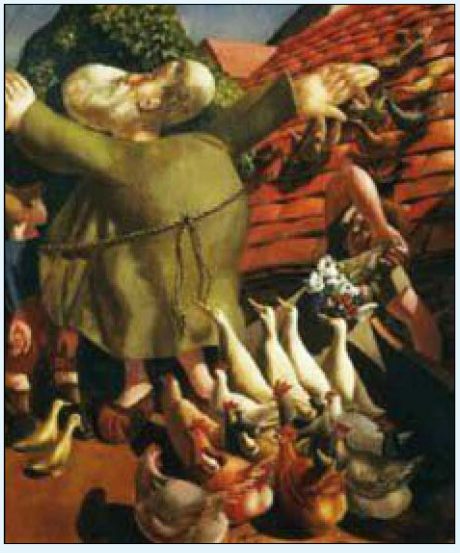
In this respect, wrote St Augustine, 'demons had great knowledge, but no charity.' Jesus revealed himself to the demons 'as was requisite to strike with terror the beings from whose tyranny he was about to free those who were predestined to his kingdom.' The various exorcisms in the gospels [cf. Mark 6.13; 7.24–30; 16.9], therefore, do not simply represent one of the wonders that Jesus does; his exorcisms are not just a species within the genus 'miracle,' so to speak. In a sense, rather, those exorcisms represent and typify the very purpose of the Incarnation.

God's Son came to earth precisely to set man free from the domination of the demons. 'It was unworthy of the goodness of God,' wrote St Athanasius, 'that creatures made by him should be reduced to nothing through the deceit wrought upon man by the devil' [*On the Incarnation*, 2.6]. Each time, then, that Jesus drove out a demon, he exhibited to all who beheld the deed his resolve to win back for God what God had created. Each exorcism was a promise, pledge and prophecy of the Word's final descent into hell, to set free the prisoners. ND

Sacred vision

Spencer – St Francis and the Birds

It is tempting to dismiss this humorous painting, rejected by the Royal Academy in 1935, as naïve, quaint and faintly ridiculous. But the image of St Francis as a fat friar surrounded by the ducks and chickens of the village is a witty example of Spencer's depiction of Christianity as an everyday experience. Spencer used his own father, wearing dressing gown and slippers, as a model for the saint, and drew most of his inspiration from the daily life of his beloved village of Cookham in Berkshire.



In the painting St Francis flings his arms to the heavens as the birds watch in fascination or curiosity from behind him and from the nearby rooftop. Reminiscent of Gauguin's brightly-coloured 'primitive' works depicting the paradise he found on the island of Tahiti or Pieter Bruegel's earthy, riotous scenes of sixteenth-century Flemish daily life, the painting turns a simple village scene into an easy and uncomplicated biblical allegory.

However, this does not mean that we should take its simple, idyllic appeal at face value. Spencer worked as a stretcher-bearer and infantryman during World War I and had certainly seen his share of suffering. Although the charming farmyard setting of *St Francis and the Birds* is far from most people's everyday experience of Christianity, Spencer draws out, in a lively and colourful visual language, the importance of finding human solace and a deeply religious foundation in seemingly mundane or trivial activities and gestures.

Rosie Razzall

His trustworthiness

Thomas Seville CR *disagrees with Simon Heans' assessment of Rowan Williams'* Tokens of Trust, *and finds much to recommend in the Archbishop's presentation of the meaning of faith*

It was said, in a valedictory appreciation of Robert Runcie by the *Tablet* columnist John F.X. Harriott, that he refused to pass on 'Mickey Mouse' Christianity. This strength is much in evidence in this introduction to the faith by his successor but two, all this in a piece which is faithful to the teaching of the Great Tradition and seeks to make this fresh for the seeker now.

This short work is an account of what the faith *means*, so there is little of what used to be called natural theology. The Archbishop is too much a student of history and of Balthasar and Barth not to be wary of the deceptions of that approach when not subordinated to the God of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Exposition is its own apologetic. This is why the question of whether God exists is not to the fore, which is why I think Simon Heans, in his articles in New Directions [July and August], misreads the argument of such a book. For what it is worth, to say in virtue of the whole of existence, that there is one not part of it, not like it, and to call that reality 'God' is one of the purposes of the Five Ways of St Thomas, that reality which 'all call God'.

Trustworthiness of God

More biblically, one might think, the account which arises is one which is based on the trustworthiness of God, complete and utter. His Grace pays especial attention to the creeds, so beginning with 'I believe in God the Father Almighty', proceeding to the reality of Christ and the Holy Spirit and then with the Church. Belief is primarily about trusting, not about assenting to a series of strange-sounding propositions. The Archbishop's learning and imaginative powers make for a scintillating run of examples and illustrations. It will serve to disabuse both Christians and others that Christians believe in a being who can do what he likes and who can correspond to one's wishes with alacrity. There are wise observations on what it is *not* to believe in God.

His Grace begins with the crisis in trust adumbrated by Anora Neil in her Reith Lectures and then moves to unpacking what it is to trust in God, trust in God which has certain consequences. Orthodox teachings, sombre-sounding as they are, that God does not need us and is happy in himself, are well treated: 'When – rather rarely – in our world we see someone acting without any thought for themselves, without reward or consolation, wholly focussed on another, we see a faint reflection of what God is naturally like' [p. 13], a token of trust.

Theory and reality

'What God shows himself to be in Jesus is simply what he always is…God is thus and not otherwise' [p. 70]. God's unconditional love, inexhaustible trustworthiness, find here their centre. This chapter is also the centre of the book and one emerges from the exposition of a two-nature in one person Christology, the virginal conception and bodily resurrection deftly defended against detractors, refreshed indeed; 'consubstantial ought to be one of the most exciting words in our vocabulary.' Simon Heans does not give this due weight; it is not, I think, good theology to suppose that God and Jesus are identical [ND, August]. This is as good and as succinct a statement of what the Incarnation means as I know. With a nice Augustinian focus on peace as what God desires for us, the mystery of salvation is presented in succession, quick and full. He is surely right in warning us against too much weight given to *theories* here, rather than the reality that 'whatever it took – and takes – for us to be set free from our destructive and deceitful traps has been done through what happened on Good Friday' [p. 88].

belief is primarily about trusting, not about assenting to a series of strange-sounding propositions

The Spirit, 'the breath of Jesus life', receives treatment in respect of both Christ and Church; this reflects a communion-oriented direction of the reality of creation and salvation: 'the life that happens when we breathe the air of God is always life *together*.' It is not really acceptable to live this life without the other: 'The slogan of the Church's life is 'not without the other'; no I without you, no I without a we' [p. 106]. Despite (or perhaps because of?) his Anglo-Catholic background, the reality of the Church, places and people where this life is tangible is not confined to the Church as commonly recognized: 'at times we learn something about what most matters in the Church by looking outside its visible boundaries' [p. 128]. The Church is holy, one might say, when she is also penitent. God's faithfulness to himself is there in the last things: 'If God holds on to us through death, he holds on to every aspect of us – not just to a specially protected, 'immortal' bit of us' [p. 141].

Faith accountable to reason

His Grace is aware of how challenging belief in God can be, and it is clear to this reader that belief needs to be responsible to a world such as ours; testimonies, whether those of Jews such as Etty Hillesum or the recent martyrs of Melanesia, speak of what it is to believe and why belief makes sense as nothing else can. There is a treatment of the problem of evil on the lines of 'if God creates a world then it has to have risk', though the author has treated of this better elsewhere and I suspect that this is not the section that he thinks most satisfactory. But then what intellectual solution to theodicy can ever be wholly satisfactory if it is to be adequate morally?

There are sections on the Bible, baptism and eucharist (modern Western, if strongly epicletic), the angels, hell and the rest. Too brief is the rationale for the ministry and the real visible Church is not much discussed; reasons of space or priorities, I suspect, rather than a Protestant suspicion of such a notion. The text is beautifully illustrated with paintings by David Jones; the photographs add less.

Every reader will wish that something else had been touched upon. His Grace makes much of faith and trust and also the importance that the faith is accountable to Logos, to reason, as does the Pope. Yet I miss reference to the role of the articulation of truth, of 'first truth', the Word that is revealed. I look forward to its treatment in a future edition. ND

Boy Bishop

The diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania has itself a new bishop, consecrated early last month. So far, so pedestrian. But, at just 32 years of age, the Right Revd Sean W Rowe is now the youngest member of the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church (proprietor: Mrs K J Schori). Crumbs!

One so very young must be very special indeed, particularly as he was easily elected on the first ballot from a slate of four candidates. No doubt his qualities will make themselves felt in due course – particularly, one imagines, the extensive ministerial experience he will have gained since his ordination as deacon way back on 27 May, 2000, and since his priesting on 2 December that same year.

Toast in Ohio

30Days' invitation to the centennial celebrations of Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland, Ohio seems unaccountably to have been lost in the post. According to the news release, all sorts of fun and games were being planned for the big day on 30 September.

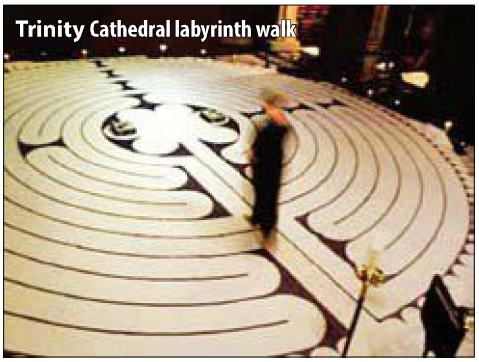
At the morning Festival Eucharist, the preacher was slated to be the Dean, the Very Revd Tracey Lind, and, afterwards, the congregation was due to gather for a group photograph taken by 'acclaimed Cleveland photographer Jennie Jones', after which there was to be the sealing and burying of a 50-year time capsule *and* a reception!

According to the cathedral website, the 'diverse' congregation numbers 700, so Jennie will certainly have her work cut out if they all turn up! In fact, so vibrant is the cathedral's life that not only do they have two Eucharists each Sunday – they also have one during the week! (Thursday lunchtime, if you're really interested.)

Not only that, they also have a weekly labyrinth walk every Tuesday evening! No wonder, then, that Dean Tracey is a candidate for election to be Bishop of Chicago. She is naturally 'honored and humbled' to be a candidate, so it's a shame that folk have been calling her candidacy into question for no other reason than her lovely partner, Emily.

However, by the time you read this, The House of Bishops of TEC (proprietor: Mrs K J Schori) may have rolled over at its meeting taking place in New Orleans from 20 to 25 September and heeded the Archbishop of Canterbury's counsel that there must be no more out gay bishops, in which case, of course, Tracey (not to mention Emily) will be toast.

Here's hoping that the magical centennial celebrations (and photograph) are in no way spoilt and that the diocese of Chicago eventually gets a bishop really worthy to be a successor to the luminaries who have gone before - such as Frank T Griswold III (whatever became of him?).


Trinity Cathedral labyrinth walk

Hell, no!

Full marks, or perhaps the dunce's hat, to the Head of St Peter the Apostle Catholic Primary School in Melbourne, Australia, a Mr Michael McGrath, who refused entry to the school to a child because of his unsuitable surname. Five year old Max probably enjoyed all the media attention, but his Dad, Alex Hell, understandably feels rather got at. Mr Hell explained that he had Austrian heritage and that the name means "bright". (Sadly, though, not bright enough to think of changing it!)

Charm offensive

A reader writes to say that he thought George Austin hadn't gone far enough in his critique of the Pensions Board's retirement housing scheme – CHARM – in these pages last June. On the grounds that anyone who thinks that Fr Austin is guilty of being over-generous must by definition belong in the world of 30Days, we are happy to provide a platform for him here:

'The Scheme charges 4% interest which increases each year as the clergy pension increases. This is little better than most fixed rate mortgages. Further, the scheme retains a percentage interest in the houses. Most of us would not mind investing our money in order to get a better rate of interest than we get in the building society, allied with very substantial capital growth. And retired clergy are not even allowed to put their own guaranteed annuity into their house purchase! Most of them would have done much better with a fixed rate mortgage from a bank or building society.'

George Austin also reported the sale by the Church Commissioners of their financial interests in the mortgage loans granted under the CHARM scheme by the Pensions Board. Given that the sale price was a cool £134.46 million, our correspondent wonders what was the value of the original loans and what the yield has been in terms of interest over the years?

Presumably, Grainger Trust plc would not have stumped up quite so much loot if the whole scheme were not a very nice little earner indeed! Hopefully, a member of General Synod will have the wit to table a question asking just to what extent the clergy – retired and soon to retire – have been the milch cow in all this.

Onwards and upwards

Warmest congratulations to FiF member Fr Antony Homer on his recent Institution and Induction to the FiF parish of Holy Trinity, Winchmore Hill, in succession to Fr Malcolm Gray. And warmest thanks too to the observant member of the congregation that evening who has supplied 30Days with a copy of the Order of Service, from which we were much diverted to read that, prior to taking the Oath of Allegiance and the Oath of Canonical Obedience, Fr Homer apparently made *The Declaration of Ascent*. Quite how Fr Homer plans to take the parish further up the candle than his illustrious predecessor remains to be seen.

Copy for 30 Days should reach FiF office by the 10th day of the month:
30days@forwardinfaith.com

Head of the church

***George Austin** on the changing and often fraught relationship between Church and State in eleventh- and early twelfth-century England and the emergence of cronyism on the bench of bishops*

The years following the Synod of Whitby have been rightly described as a 'golden age' for the Church, in scholarship, culture and spirituality. Even so, the Venerable Bede could write to Egbert, Bishop of York, to complain about the state of the Church in the north. There were bishops who were shamefully negligent of their duties in dioceses anyway too large for proper supervision, and whose clergy were ignorant and worldly.

From Germany, Boniface contrasted the 'loose-living' English with the more disciplined Germans. Moreover, it was not just a few individuals who complained: councils were held to correct ecclesiastical abuses. Bishops should be more conscientious in visiting their dioceses; they must see the clergy were properly trained and require uniformity in worship. They were to visit monasteries and ensure that monks dressed properly, and that nuns did not go about in 'gaudy, gay clothes such as lay girls use.'

Rather like the modern story of the two nuns from a community in Rome that had abandoned the wearing of the habit. Walking back to their convent late at night, they became increasingly panicky. To their relief, as they turned a corner, there was a uniformed policeman to whom they explained they were nuns and kept being propositioned. He looked them up and down and asked, 'And how did you know I was a policeman?'

William the Conqueror

By the time Edward came to the throne in 1043, the Church was reasonably stable and quite prosperous. Unfortunately he had little admiration for the people whom he ruled and began to fill the highest offices of the Church with placemen from abroad, to the bitter resentment of English earls, who themselves sought to place their own supporters into the Church's hierarchy, with mixed results.

Of these the best was Wulfstan who became Bishop of Worcester and was later to be the only English prelate to win the confidence of William the Conqueror. The worst was Stigand, an unattractive character who usurped Robert to become Archbishop of Canterbury in 1052, while continuing to hold the see of Winchester. He was deposed in 1070 at William's instigation, while other bishops likely to be troublesome lost their sees.

It was thus that the State, in the person of the Conqueror, saved the Church from itself. King Edward's policy of filling the bench of bishops with Norman favourites divided the Church, just as did the disastrous cronyism of the 1980s. With a lack of real leadership, the latter years of the eleventh century, like those of the twentieth, had meant that deterioration and decay had set in and changes needed to be made.

But on one issue William was unmoveable, making it clear that he regarded himself as head of the Church in England. He refused to allow any papal interference, and when Pope Gregory VII threatened dire consequences if he did not submit, he issued decrees declaring that no excommunication of barons could take place without his consent; that bishops could not travel abroad without his permission; and that no one could receive a letter from the Pope unless he, the king, had read it first.

it was thus that the State, in the person of the Conqueror, saved the Church from itself

Lanfranc's reforms

William sought to produce a better Church, nominating bishops and abbots, presiding over Church Councils, and requiring churchmen as well as laymen to pay respect to his wishes. His appointment of Lanfranc to Canterbury was a stroke of genius and the new archbishop quickly began to prepare for reforms in the Church through a series of Councils.

As a result, archdeacons were appointed, simony was forbidden, and vagrant monks and nuns were rounded up. But Lanfranc was a cautious reformer. The papacy would have wished for clerical celibacy, but for the moment it was only canons of cathedrals and collegiate churches who were required to put away their wives. In future no married man might be ordained, but parish clergy who were already married could keep their wives.

King and archbishop made changes in the administration of the law, with ecclesiastical laws in future to be the responsibility of church courts under the bishop or archdeacon – a source of trouble in years hence. Together, William and Lanfranc produced a Church in England that was much stronger than it had been for many years.

But it was a relationship built on sand. When both died in 1087 and 1089 – William Rufus succeeded to the throne. For him the Church was a source of wealth, and when a see was vacant he appropriated to himself the income of that bishopric. It was expedient to see to it that vacancies lasted as long as possible. In the same way, when an abbot died, the king confiscated the entire income of the house.

Appointment of Anselm

When Lanfranc died, William Rufus left the see vacant for four years, only making an appointment when he fell ill and feared eternal punishment for his actions against the Church. Eventually he nominated Anselm, the Abbot of Bec, who was extremely reluctant to accept, not least because he was aware that he and the king could never work in harmony.

In particular, he knew the attempt to curtail the power of the king against the Church and increase the influence of the Pope. It was a long battle, not least in winning the bishops and abbots to his side, who, as always, had an eye on the main chance and were careful to be sure which would be the winning side.

Nevertheless, by his death in 1109, Anselm had broken the old independence of the kings of England. The Church had experienced both the best and worst and when the State had gone too far in exercising inappropriate power over the Church, it had been defeated. At least for the moment.

Anselm was one of many in the Church involved in the struggle over the matter of investitures. At the heart of the problem was the fact that the bishops were not only spiritual leaders but also feudal tenants-in-chief with considerable temporal powers and the wealth that went with them.

It has its echo in the present day, as we shall see in the next article – an echo that must raise doubts about the propriety of the present Church/State relationship. ND