NEW·DIRECTIONS

Forward in Faith supports The Society in renewing the Church in its historic faith

September 2026

The Seal of the Confessional
Tyndale at 500
Young adult faith

St Andrew's, Jarrom Street
Praying the Office
Save the Parish

The faith of our Prime Minister
Societas Sanctae Birgittae
An ordinand on placement



A call to prayer

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

Please forgive this piece focusing on matters which are internal to Forward in Faith, but I hope by the end of it you will see why. A booklet is included as a supplement to this edition of *New Directions* with details of Forward in Faith's annual meeting next month. The booklet addresses two issues: the Charity's financial standing and its Constitution. It is the first of these two topics which I would like to cover. There is no value in me repeating the text in its entirety from the booklet but if I may just highlight a few of the key issues arising.

Forward in Faith has incurred operating deficits of £80,000 in 2023, £100,000 in 2024, £64,000 in 2025, and £41,000 in the first half of 2026. This is before two significant legacies are taken into account; one received in 2024 and one in 2025. They are the first legacies of that size which Forward in Faith has received for some quite considerable period of time. Many other charities, across all sectors, have had the same experience. It has become a more challenging environment in which to operate.

The Trustees have been alert to the financial challenges the Charity faces and have ensured that substantial reductions have been made to the Charity's expenditure, the two biggest items being staffing costs (which have gone down by one quarter) and the costs associated with *New Directions* (the publication is now issued six times per annum, down from ten).

In terms of income, the principal source is the funding we receive from your generous personal memberships of Forward in Faith and from those parishes which, in a similarly generous fashion, opt to affiliate to The Society. After over a decade of no increase in the suggested minimum donation levels for both categories, the Trustees have set £4 per month or £48 per annum as the new individual membership level (less of course for those with restricted financial means) and twice that, £96 per annum, for parish affiliation. This still equates to less than £1 per week for individuals and less than £2 per week for parishes.

We remain hopeful that some of the Anglo-Catholic charities with historic legacies, amounting to much more than Forward in Faith could ever amass, will be in a position to provide funding in the future.

All this talk of money is meaningless unless we are clear in saying what we want to do with it. Forward in Faith needs funding so that it can employ a couple of members of staff to fulfil its two principal roles: firstly, as a campaigning body in the Church of England and, secondly, as the body which supports the work of The Society and its Council of Bishops.

Forward in Faith is not looking to expand its remit and is certainly not looking to possess funds beyond those which it needs to function effectively. Continuing to retain a couple of years' worth of expenditure in reserves, if at all possible in the light of the operating deficit, would be wise and accord with good practice.

I write this piece just as preparations for the forthcoming General Synod elections have ramped up significantly. Forward in Faith is playing a key role in supporting the Catholic Group on General Synod in those preparations. This is exactly the sort of activity which needs to be preserved for the future.

Even more crucially, the issue of whether the Church of England should retain the Seal of the sacrament of confession is centre stage once more. At the most recent General Synod meeting, the Bishop of Tewkesbury, who is the lead bishop on safeguarding, raised the possibility of the Seal not applying when matters of alleged child sexual abuse arise during confession. However, no evidence has been produced to link the Seal with lapses in good safeguarding practice; practice which we strongly support.

Qualifying the Seal in this way would be to abolish the Seal and to abolish the Seal would be to abolish the sacrament of confession. Forward in Faith will do all it can to make the case for the retention of the Seal. It is vital for our movement that we do so.

I am immensely grateful to you all for your support for our work. Our work on the retention of the Seal is the most compelling reason I can cite to ask you for your continued support and, if your circumstances allow it, for your increased levels of financial support. ND

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Please note that the articles published in *New Directions* are for readers' interest and do not necessarily reflect the views of either the Editor, or Forward in Faith



WELCOME

Welcome to the September issue of *New Directions*. This issue has a broad focus on prayer. In addition to the reflections and discussions offered in these pages we would urge you to pray for educational institutions as a new academic year begins; particularly our children and young people in Church of England schools and for our Theological Education Institutions.

A reminder about the deferred Forward in Faith Annual Meeting, now to take place at 1pm on Wednesday 21 October 2026.

We also always welcome new contributors to *New Directions*. Please email nd.editor@forwardinfaith.com if you'd like to submit an article or talk more about what this might involve. Please also feel free to share any thoughts or feedback on recent issues.

EDITORIAL

Like as the hart

***Clare Williams* reflects on the theme of prayer in this issue**

Psalm 63.1-3
O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.

As the psalmist writes, our longing for God can be likened to the longing for water, a thirst which goes beyond feeling a slightly dry throat but the sense of fainting and being in desperate need of revival. Psalm 42 also speaks of this kind of desire for God and the line, made famous by Herbert Howells, 'Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God' has often been on my lips this summer.

2026 has seen a long, hot and dry summer with drought declared in many places and the ground underneath our feet has been crying out with the need for water. The cover image of this magazine was chosen to reflect both the significant effects of the dry weather on our landscape, but also what it has revealed. Many historic sites across the UK have reported the scorched grass and earth yielding a view of ancient remains beneath. For example, Fountains Abbey where the footprint of monastic buildings can now be seen as the drought has exposed these archaeological secrets.

I am sure that I can't be alone in being reminded, through this dry summer, of our own need of God and the words spoken to us so eloquently in the psalmist's pen, expressing the importance of prayer. The images have also expressed this and reminded us of the history of prayer in this land – another poetic line comes to mind, 'These stones that have echoed their praises are holy'. While there have been mainly uncomfortable things about this summer – not least the heat experienced at occasions like ordinations and festivals, where copes, mitres and chasubles have added significant weight and heat – there have been powerful reminders of our need to rely on God and on God's good provision for our lives.

One translation of the Beatitudes, which I am fond of, renders, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit' as, 'Blessed are they who know their need of God'. Turning to God in prayer and knowing our need of God is a key theme within this issue of *New Directions*. Andrew Wadsworth's article on 'Continuous prayer' draws our attention most closely to this – and we look forward with anticipation to the second part of this in the November issue. However, prayer runs throughout many more of our pages this month; Ian McCormack writes about turning to God in prayer through Confession, Alex Honey encourages us to pray the Daily Office, Guy Jamieson reflects on praying with Saint John Henry Newman and David Halpin considers the role of prayer in the life of our new Prime Minister.

Even beyond these more explicit pieces of writing, we see how prayer features in young adult journeys to faith, the work of prayer for Sister Carol and those living the Religious Life as well as global prayer as we hear about work in Zimbabwe, Sweden and America. We are reminded of the importance of prayer as individuals, in community, using the Bible and in our parish churches.

September, therefore, presents us with a different new beginning, a new academic year and, for many, a shift from holidays into regular rhythms.

Prayer – as we see in Andrew Wadsworth's article – is a continuous work and process. We therefore can't see it as a job to be done or an item on a 'to-do' list, it requires daily re-commitment. It should also be the beginning and end of all that we do, informing and shaping all our other work. So while we can't ever say that we can start or finish with prayer or ever fully know how or what we are doing, there are times in our yearly cycle when it is an easier moment to reset and rebalance ourselves.

It is often suggested that January brings the best opportunity with a new year and new year's resolutions, but January is a dark and difficult month and for many, simply keeping on keeping on may feel enough. September, therefore, presents us with a different new beginning, a new academic year and, for many, a shift from holidays into regular rhythms.

The 'back to school' posters will have been in our shops for many weeks throughout August reminding us of this pattern, relevant to so many. It may also be a good call for us to remember that every day is a 'school day' where we are learning afresh how to walk in God's ways and how truly to know our need of God, particularly through turning to him in regular prayer. I pray that this month gives space for a reset or a re-balancing of your life of prayer and that the reflections within this magazine may provide some encouragement and some tools or inspirations for your ongoing work of prayer. ND

A means of grace and hope of glory

In defence of the Seal of the Confessional

Since the earliest times, sacramental confession has been both a rite and a right of the members of the English Church. It is a rite because the liturgical books of the Church provide for it, supported by Canon Law. The Reformation – and the transition from the Church in England to the Church of England – did not change this. Successive Books of Common Prayer contained liturgical provision for the rite, culminating in the 1662 provision found in the Visitation of the Sick and referred to explicitly in the Exhortation to Holy Communion. Thus, the Prayer Book, whilst not placing auricular confession among the Dominical Sacraments, nonetheless clearly considers it to be a practice 'allowed in the Scriptures' (Article 25 of the 39). As such, it is in good company: the same is true of Confirmation, Ordination, and Holy Matrimony.

When the medieval code of Canon Law was superceded by the 1603/4 canons, the Seal of the Confessional (to which we will return shortly) was explicitly retained as an exception to a general rule permitting clergy to report laity for misconduct. Thus was the earlier – indeed ancient – understanding of the rite of sacramental confession maintained in law as well as in practice.

So much for rite. Sacramental confession is also – and has ever been – a *right* of church men and women in England. It is a means of grace and a hope of glory which God in His wisdom and providence has provided for sinners in need of forgiveness and absolution, finding its Gospel authority in John 20.23 and Matthew 18.18 (the former being quoted directly in the BCP Ordination service, such is its centrality to the Anglican understanding of priesthood). To be sure, it is not the *only* such means, and at the Reformation the English Church removed from her members the obligation to make sacramental confession at specified times. Nonetheless, the Church reminded her members in its official books and pronouncements that their right to this rite remained and exhorted them to make use of it.

The reformers and the Caroline divines bore eloquent witness to this (see my article in *New Directions*, December 2023/January 2024, which forms the basis for this paragraph and the next). Richard Hooker called confession a, 'profitable ordinance'; Bishop Overall of Norwich declared that, 'in the priest's absolution there is the true power and virtue of forgiveness.' Furthermore, to ensure that English church members had access to this means of grace provided for them by their Prayer Book, a series of 17th century Visitation Articles asked churchwardens not merely whether their incumbent was offering auricular confession, but also if he was announcing its availability. Among those to issue such Articles was John Cosin, Archdeacon of the East Riding, subsequently Bishop of Durham, and author of the translation of the *Veni Creator* which is used at the ordination of priests in both the Book of Common Prayer and Common Worship. Lancelot Andrewes issued similar Articles, along with many other bishops and archdeacons. This was not a niche or partisan position.

Having asked about the provision of confession, the Articles went on to ask if the incumbent kept the Seal: 'If any man…being sick or whole…confess his secret and hidden sins to the priest, for the unburdening of his conscience and for the receiving of spiritual consolation and ease of mind by him, doth the said priest reveal, or hath he at any time revealed and made known unto any person whatsoever, any crime or offence so committed to his trust and secrecy, contrary to the 113th canon of our Church?'

Recent public pronouncements around the Seal have framed it in the language of confidentiality – such as one might expect to receive from a doctor or a lawyer. But this is to misunderstand the nature of the Seal. It is not so much a guarantee of confidentiality, as an acknowledgement of the unalterable and inalienable truth that, 'that which is known in confession is, as it were, unknown, since a man knows it, not as man, but as God knows it'. So wrote St Thomas Aquinas, the greatest exponent of this doctrine in the western tradition. Within the specific context of the Church of England, the teaching of Aquinas was taken



up by Edward Bouverie Pusey, who wrote, '…what is said to us in confession is as though it had never been said…What I know through confession, I know less, than what I do not know'. Pusey summed up: 'If any should have received confession of a sin, which would make him who confessed it amenable [i.e. susceptible] to the criminal law (as murder), it is as if the grave closed over it. He is forbidden, under penalty of sin, to allude to it, out of confession, even to him who confessed it'.

the Seal of the Confessional is not incidental to the sacrament – it is an integral part of it, and must be maintained even in the case of, 'crime or offence'

As this suggests, and as the testimony of the catholic church of which the Church of England claims in her formularies to be a part bears unanimous witness, the Seal of the Confessional is not incidental to the sacrament – it is an integral part of it, and must be maintained even in the case of, 'crime or offence' (Cosin), even in the case of, 'murder' (Pusey).

The Seal is thus, *sui generis*, totally unique in the demands it places upon those bound by it. In any other encounter – pastoral etc. – a member of the English Church may expect the same level of confidentiality as from a doctor or lawyer – extensive, but not absolute. But the Seal is different and it is not the prerogative of any priest to divulge the contents of a sacramental confession. Indeed, as Dr Pusey says of a confessor: 'As man, he may swear with a clear conscience that he knows not, what he knows only as God'. Removing the Seal is in fact impossible, such is its centrality to the very existence of the sacrament. To speak of removing the Seal is, in reality, shorthand for removing canonical or legal provision for it, which is a rather different thing.

There are other, practical things that may be said in defence of the Seal. Survivors and experienced confessors have borne witness that it is of immense value to victims of abuse who have found in the confessional a safe space to begin their journey towards disclosure (see, for example, articles by a Survivor in *New Directions* September 2018 and by Fr Thomas Seville CR in ND December 2018/January 2019). Furthermore, I am not aware of a single case in the Church of England where a safeguarding scandal has been caused by use or abuse of the Seal. Rather, all of the high profile cases have been caused by abuse of power, or neglect of duty, by persons in position of high rank or authority within the Church. Seeking to deflect from this unpalatable truth by attacking the Seal would be unjust, unhelpful and very probably counter-productive.

Sacramental confession is both a rite and a right of the members of the English Church. To attempt to remove the Seal would be to remove both the rite and the provision necessary to meet the right. Such an action would destroy almost 2000 years of Christian custom and practice in this land. It will not do. ND

Ian McCormack is Priest Associate of The Church of the Advent, Boston MA.



Don't look back in anger

Emma Joy Gregory **provides reflection on the end of the most recent quinquennium of General Synod**

2026 marks the conclusion of the current quinquennium, which began a year late in 2021 following the COVID-related delay to General Synod elections.

It has been an eventful five years, marked by an unusually large intake of new members, memorable debates and, inevitably, some unexpected turns. This article reflects on the July group of sessions before looking ahead to some of the issues that the next Synod may have to confront.

The July 2026 Synod – highlights

Typical of the final Synod of a quinquennium, the July sessions were, in some ways, a little more subdued. They took place in stifling heat, amid the parched grass that characterised this summer and there was a weary sense of anticipation about the forthcoming autumn elections. Several members, myself included, will not be standing again.

In spite of a calmer mood in general, one debate which generated considerable controversy concerned Kairos Palestine. The motion opened: 'That this Synod respond to the call of Palestinian Christians to stand in solidarity with them and their fellow Palestinians in non-violent resistance to the ongoing occupation'.

The first moments of the debate saw a member attempt to move to next business, which is essentially a statement to say that a significant number of members consider that it is not appropriate or welcome at this time and place. That, however, was defeated, and the debate continued, working through seven amendments, all trying to grapple with the difficult matter faced. One amendment passed, changing a proposed call to 'receive' the Kairos Palestine declarations to a call to 'hear' them.

After delaying the final vote to the following day due to running out of time, the main motion was passed. Arguably the outcome was rather unsatisfactory without decisive voting figures to back it up: there were 70 abstentions in total. To me, it seemed that Synod members were being asked to speak into an issue which is far beyond the remit for which they were elected: as if there are not enough irreconcilable differences within our own Church for Synod members to try to get their heads around!

We also heard the reasons for the suspension of progress with the National Church Governance Measure, which sought to restructure the National Church Institutions, including the Archbishops' Council. It was one of the most significant pieces of work undertaken during the last five years and had received final approval from General Synod. However, progress was subsequently halted because the relevant report had not been adopted by the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament. There is an understandable sense of frustration among those who worked hard on the Measure and hoped to see it progress. What happens next remains unresolved, and the next Synod will have to decide whether, and in what form, this work should be revived.



Emma Joy Gregory and Mary Nagel, General Synod members until July 2026 who have served (respectively) for 21 and 37 years.

Other significant business included debates on neurodiversity, the route map to Net Zero, the protection of nature on Church Commissioners' land, and support for looked-after children and those in care. Synod also approved the Clergy Conduct Rules and amendments to the House of Laity and Clergy Election Rules. The National Redress Measure returned for further amendments after having reached final approval in 2025.

Readers of *New Directions* may also be interested to hear that Synod finally approved a new liturgical commemoration of the 21 Martyrs of Libya, recalling the migrant workers abducted and executed by ISIS on a beach in 2015. This is a welcome addition to the Church's liturgical calendar, ensuring that their witness and martyrdom are remembered within the worshipping life of the Church.

Living in Love and Faith

With no formal discussion being brought by the House of Bishops at this group of sessions, controver-

sial matters around sexuality would have been left alone had it not been for one Private Members' Motion which was timetabled to be discussed. The motion put was that 'there are no fundamental objections to being in a committed, faithful, intimate same-sex relationship and that such a relationship can be entirely compatible with Christian discipleship'. For a relatively short time the Synod grappled with this question, but ultimately the motion was lost, due to the voting from the House of Bishops (11 in favour, 14 against, 4 abstentions). It would seem that the bishops are minded to wait for proper process before any more public statements are made on this very contentious issue.

Looking back over the hours of discussion around Living in Love and Faith, which was one of the reasons why many current Synod members stood for election in the first place, it is striking that there has not really been a single, clear or settled outcome on the central questions that prompted the LLF process.

Potential new Synod members should be aware that this has been the biggest issue on the Synod agenda for the last decade and yet remains as complex and unresolved as ever. No doubt campaigning on issues of sexuality will continue, and Synod members could and should expect anything in terms of what is required of them: more group discussions, more publication of papers, more debates on the floor of Synod, or radio silence. Even so, a candidate's positions on matters of sexuality will be the defining controversial issue at the forefront of this year's elections.

Looking Ahead: The Seal of the Confessional

The *Report of the Seal of the Confessional*, conducted by a working party in 2018, concluded with a clear statement that it did not recommend amending practice and rules on the seal; rather, it advised that training about the sacramental ministry of reconciliation be integrated with mandatory core safeguarding training and refreshed as an obligatory element of Continuing Ministerial Development. Additionally, in each diocese there should be a 'Bishop's Adviser in the Sacramental Ministry of Reconciliation.' The House of Bishops agreed in May 2024 to trial training in a number of dioceses, although no report back has been received yet.

Nevertheless, the spotlight on the Seal continues, including in some questions submitted by General Synod members in July 2026, implying problems around the continuation of the Seal co-existing with the, 'urgency of moving towards Mandatory Reporting'.

Encouragingly, beyond the floor of Synod, Catholic voices on this weighty topic have already mobilised, including an excellent colloquium at Pusey House in February 2026, poignantly entitled *Confession: The Church's Gift to the World*.

What specifically happened at the last Synod?

At the July 2026 Synod, the need to reconsider the Seal of the Confessional featured yet again as part of a verbal report to the General Synod from the new lead Bishop for safeguarding (the Bishop of Tewkesbury). There was an opportunity for Synod members to ask short questions.

My question to the speaker called for a reminder that confession ('reconciliation') is a sacrament, therefore it is distinct from any other practice and that we should make this our priority. The response given at the time revealed fundamental misunderstandings about the confessional, conflating the sacrament with cover-up of historic scandal. We were told that pressures to change the Seal had been renewed recently in the light of the Makin report, more specifically the abuse of John Smyth and the decades of secrecy around it.

This explanation was of grave concern. Not only is there nothing to suggest that the sacrament of confession played any part in the Smyth case; more importantly, it misses the point that cover-up and confession are by no means the same practice. Indeed, they might be understood as opposites. The Smyth case was one of the most monumental and horrifying abuse cases faced by the Church, but the sacred Seal of the confessional must not become collateral damage as the Church seeks, rightly, to address the profound failures exposed by it. It would seem that our Church needs a much deeper appreciation of how the confessional process works and how it can actually enhance and not frustrate, good safeguarding practice.

How might this return to future Synod meetings?

In short, the simple answer to this is: we don't actually know. There is nothing on the table as yet and we can't predict if a motion might be brought to the General Synod in a particular form. However, it is clear that questions around the Seal continue, and the most important point is that the defence of this sacrament is as robust and coherent as possible.

Catholics must lead the way when it comes to combating misunderstanding and misinformation, whilst also demonstrating a deep and unequivocal commitment to improving safeguarding practices and eliminating abuse from our Church. We are known and respected for speaking into debates with intelligence and care. When we are at our best, our enthusiasm is infectious. Some of the best speeches made on this topic in previous Synods have come from Evangelicals who honour the sacrament, even if they do not regularly partake in it. Additionally, even if we disagree with the 'Affirming Catholic' group on the ordination of women, this point is, I would very much hope, something we can unite around. So, it is important that we work closely with our brothers and sisters in different traditions to defend what is most important in Church practice.

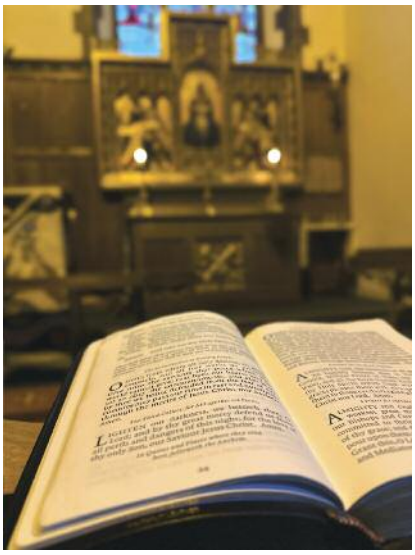
The task for the next quinquennium is therefore twofold: to defend the integrity of the sacrament of reconciliation with theological clarity and to demonstrate that doing so is entirely compatible with an uncompromising commitment to safeguarding. Those two commitments should not be presented as opposites. The Church should be capable of holding both together. ND

A return to the Office

***Alex Honey* exhorts the power of praying the daily Office both individually and in community**

What is the worst email you have ever received? 'Come and see me in my office. RW.'

I can safely say that, for anyone at St Stephen's House under Fr Robin, this is surely it. This email, acting as a pseudo court summons, was most often sent to those who missed Morning Prayer (usually due to over-indulgence). After receiving the email, the accused would sojourn down to the corridor of power in St Stephen's House, knock on Fr Robin's door and wait to be summarily executed by a group of his peers, all armed with unused copies of Mission Praise. Of course it was not quite that bad, but missing the Office, even in order to say it on your own later on, was seen not just as bad for your spiritual life, but bad for the life of the whole college, and I think there is something in this.



The Office which marks the beginning and end of the day in the life of the church, is so much more wonderful when it is prayed with other people. Just as God observed in Genesis that it 'is not good for man to be alone', so it is not good for man to only pray alone. Who among us could say that we pray with the same level of integrity or purposefulness alone as we do together, that we use the same measured approach to the Psalms as we do when alternating verses with another, or even that we make use of the full readings provided and do not rush to the end of them without 'inwardly digesting' anything at all?

I have had the wonderful privilege of saying the Office five days a week with my incumbent during my curacy. This is a gift I know many curates, even those in our own stable, do not enjoy and is one I am immensely grateful for. It forces you to take the Office seriously even when you do not want to face God, or go into church, or wake up early, because you are no longer doing it 'for yourself', or because Canon Law requires it of you, but because there is another person relying on you to turn up and pray with them. What is truly amazing about saying the Office corporately, is that people with overwhelming individual distractions and excuses, can set them aside for the building up of the other in prayer; this is a wonderful and life-giving thing.

It is also a lesson in humility. You cannot control how someone else says their lines of psalmody or the canticles, or how fast they answer the responses, yet you must match one another in saying the Lord's Prayer and the Creed; it is a great lesson in 'bearing with' one another. I really would encourage anyone, particularly retired clergy, to offer to say the Office in one of their local churches every day. So often I am told, with great sorrow, that the Office is not said corporately where people have retired to; I am afraid you must be the change you want to see. The worst thing that can happen is that you continue to say it alone, but even then you say it in a place which reverberates with the prayers of generations of faithful men and women, so give it a go!

Sometimes it may be necessary, due to the difficulties of work, or childcare, or life in general, to say the Office on your own, so I asked someone who ministered rurally for several decades, and faithfully said the Office, for some tips. His first instinct was to not get too obsessed with keeping to exact times each day – the Office is primarily a thanksgiving to God, not a chore, or a hardship. Another thing he said was to try to not have something to do immediately after the Office; it makes you rush through it. In terms of how best to say the Office itself, ensure you are keeping the gap in the psalm verse. It may be apocryphal but apparently, in the 1980s, the practice at Mirfield was to say the Lord's name three times, and in St Stephen's House, to say the Hail Mary, in order to maintain the break.

The Office is the prayer of the whole Church, particularly when you cannot make a Mass, and it can structure daily prayer to God in a way which is not dependent on how you might be feeling, or whether you are able to make it to church. Perhaps we should be bolder in recommending the Office, whether that be the Divine Office, or the Book of Common Prayer, or Common Worship, to those who we visit who are housebound, unwell, or in a care home; it may provide a great balm, especially to those used to regularly coming to Mass in church. When you do say the Office, remember that it is the prayer of the whole Church, and, when followed faithfully, is never really said alone; millions of people a day are saying it with you.

The Office is a great gift of God to His Church, and we should not squirrel it away to be used hurriedly in our own homes, but offer it in our churches, and use it for the building up of the people. ND

Alex Honey is the curate of the parishes of Heavitree and St Mary Steps in the Diocese of Exeter.

An introduction to continuous prayer

Andrew Wadsworth **gives the first in a two-part series on prayer**

'That which was wasted will be restored as Love gives Love.

Man cannot hasten that which will be except by prayer, true prayer in union with Love's creation to build a fresh that which man's folly did break and mar in pride of self.

Life flows in healing with every prayer that is of truth when self is given in abandonment that love may move.

Then is the glory not the work of man but all God's love: to whom be glory in perfect power now and evermore from all his creation.'

From 'Rhythmic Prayers' by Father Gilbert Shaw.



These words by a spiritual master in prayer set the scene for this article on continuous prayer as it reminds us that prayer is about love, the love of God for us and the love we endeavour to give to God. When such loving prayer is made and offered in a spirit of selfless integrity the world changes not as we want but as God desires. What God desires is always good.

It has always been a deep challenge in my Christian life to pray not only regularly but continuously. I cannot claim to have mastered this, indeed, it would be arrogant hubris to express any achievement in prayer of whatever form. A vulnerable humility before God is the foundation for prayer. I struggle and I fail in prayer but hope that this article acts as an encouragement to us all to persevere in prayer in whatever way we find beneficial.

The disposition for continuous prayer

I wish to begin by examining the disposition which is required to pursue continuous prayer.

In the Christian tradition of spirituality, it is the Orthodox Church of the east which places a great emphasis on continuous prayer as a vital aspect of Christian discipleship, rooted in a vibrant relationship with the living God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But what does this look like for the Christian in our busy work-driven and consumer-led western world?

Prayer is the critical expression of our absolute dependency on God. 1}It is about discovering our communion with God in silence in an ongoing conversation whereby we listen and share everything with the God who made us and redeemed us, who loves us beyond our understanding.

It is also about our discipleship following the example of Jesus who prayed continuously to his Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. Continuous prayer leads to action, which is both inspirational and well thought out, that is because an outlook and attitude is developed which is rooted in God and his incredible will and purpose. Such prayer is essentially creative, as C.S. Lewis wrote in Letters to Malcolm: 'One of the purposes for which God instituted prayer may have been to bear witness that the course of events is not governed like a state but created like a work of art to which every being makes its contribution and in prayer a conscious contribution and in which everything is both an end and a means'.

It is about learning to enter a continuous conversation with God which has its foundation and framework in the Eucharist, in the daily offices, and in the sacraments of the Church. For if we do not pray somewhere some of the time, we shall never pray everywhere all of the time.

Adoration and recollection:

Continuous prayer begins with adoration. This is a profound acknowledgement that God is. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy and Glorious Trinity is at the centre of everything. The one to whom we owe everything, our life, our existence and our redemption who loves us in ways past our imagination. This indisputable awesome fact demands only one response from us – loving adoration.

Our example as to how to do this lies with the angels who adore God, day and night. This gives us great encouragement and faith because we are never alone in our prayerful adoration of the living God.

Adoration lies at the heart of continuous prayer, and we discover adoration through our worship on Sundays and in the great festivals of the Churches year in Church, through the liturgy and through hymn singing. Every time we engage in formal worship, we are letting God be God.

However, we are not able by the necessities of life to engage in a permanent act of worship but through daily morning and evening prayer, and in particular through the recitation of the psalms, we develop an attitude of worship which we take with us in our work and play.

We are also made sensitive and aware of the things of God through the created world in the beautiful and good in nature, in art and in people and thus we respond by worshipping God. To do this we need to look intently at a tree, a flower, a cloud or a person. Our concern at that moment is not to ask what they are but to be delighted that they are, they exist. We

then joyfully allow them the mystery of what C.S. Lewis calls their, 'Divine, magical, terrifying and ecstatic existence'. This causes us to adore their creator, the living God.

Recalling the great saving truths of the faith, that is: the incarnation, the cross and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, causes us to adore and give thanks to God for his plan of salvation for us and the world.

As we pray the offices and the Eucharist, Scripture verses will stand out to us. These can be recalled during the day and thus cause to pray reflectively.

Thanksgiving:
Thanksgiving is linked to adoration, but it is about acknowledging and recognising the specific acts of God which speak of love and goodness, for which profound gratitude is always the response.

At the heart of thanksgiving is the Eucharist indeed the very word Eucharist means thanksgiving – for the salvation Jesus has wrought by dying for us on the cross. The words of the Eucharistic prayer whereby we eat the bread, his body broken in love for us, and we drink the wine, his blood shed in love for us, in order to rescue us from the permanent effects of suffering, death and evil cause us to give thanks. Such an attitude of profound thanksgiving we take into our daily prayers, morning, evening and during the day. It is always the focus in our continuous prayer a permanent recollection and remembrance. From this 'we,' as the Epistle to Diognetus says, 'will find ourselves thanking God for everything that befalls us, whether it brings pleasure or pain, because we will trust God completely'.

For if we do not pray somewhere some of the time, we shall never pray everywhere all of the time.

This is a process and does not come instantly, simply because our human nature finds it hard to thank God in bad situations. Thanksgiving is discovered through the Holy Spirit guiding us.

One key and simple way of giving thanks to God is before a meal when we can say a prayer of thanksgiving for the food which is before us and for those who have prepared it. We can also remember those who have no food in an act of intercession. There are many versions of grace before a meal, but this particular prayer summarises what we need to say: 'For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful and mindful of the needs of others'.

Confession:
We think, say and do bad things against people. Some of this is the result of personality flaws, and passionate responses to things that happen to us. Some of this is premeditated to gain the upper hand or because we are jealous of another's success. The fact is we sin; 'we err and stray like lost sheep and follow too much the devices and desires of our own hearts' as the 1662 Book of Common Prayer confession states unambiguously. Above all, we neglect God even if He does not in any way neglect us. We do not pray, and we are distracted. Confession is about acknowledging our failures and repenting of them by listening and responding to one's conscience and saying sorry to God when we mess up. This can be an immediate response once we know we have acted or thought badly. Saying the Jesus Prayer, 'Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me a sinner' can be particularly helpful as an immediate response. However, we need at set times of the year to make a formal confession and receive counsel and absolution to keep us focused on God and our relationship with Him in good order.

Intercession:
Intercession is about praying: for the positive that is for the flourishing of people and situations, for creative and loving initiatives; for those who bear heavy responsibilities; for the suffering that is those in need, the sick, and those close to death for God's healing mercies; for liberation from evil such as child abuse and modern slavery; for those who are persecuted in the cause of right and because of their Christian faith.

This is all about placing others in the hands of God without any personal agenda before the cross through the great high priest Jesus Christ. A way of doing this is to follow the Old Testament example of King Hezekiah: 'by laying it all before the Lord.' Such placing and laying people before the Lord is not about telling God what to do. As Dorothy Kerin said: 'We can then gather together ourselves and all those for whom our prayers have been asked, and hold all silently up to him, making no special request – neither asking or beseeching – but just resting, with them, in Him, desiring nothing but that our Lord may be glorified in all'.

Consistent and persistent intercessory prayer following the example of Jesus who prayed for his disciples regularly is desperately required and needed. We can remember and pray for people within the context of the great saving truths of the faith. For example, praying for people with Jesus on the cross in mind.

The reality of life means that we experience anxiety and fear arising from the hurts which are inflicted upon us in our place of work and sadly in our families. We live with the mistakes of the past and we have to deal with ethical conundrums. Our television screens and our smartphones present us with images of violence. It is into this situation that we can pray. We offer the mess and tragedy and damage of life with its acute sufferings at the foot of the cross. Jesus bears it all. Offering prayers in this way can give us grace and strength in the midst and at the heart of the agony and anguish of life.

The next article will consider how we pray for ourselves, some practices from specific prayer traditions and the pursuit of nurturing continuous prayer. ND

Andrew Wadsworth is Assistant Priest in the Apostolic Partnership of St Nicholas Arundel and St Mary's Littlehampton.

Places of most need

The importance of church buildings, in light of the disaster at St Andrew's Jarrom Street

Earlier this year, the Government decided to replace the long-standing Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme with the new Places of Worship Renewal Fund.

Around 45% of England's Grade 1 listed buildings are places of worship and the previous scheme was established in 2001 to allow the UK's listed places of worship to reclaim VAT costs for repair works.

When the Government decided to end the scheme, it cut funding for its last year by almost half, meaning eligible applicants lost out when the funding dried up six weeks early.

Whereas the previous scheme supported around 5,000 places of worship each year, the new Fund is expected to support just 100-150 a year. While the Fund aims to support urgent repairs in, 'places of most need', it is competitive and England-only. That means most of those who previously benefitted, and all those in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, will now find their repairs 20% more costly.

When I first set about drafting this article I intended to focus solely on the political arguments, but my concern for the survival of church buildings was suddenly brought much closer to home when that same night, my father's church of St Andrew, Jarrom Street, Leicester, caught fire.

My parents and I watched helplessly and in disbelief as this confident, Sir Gilbert Scott church, recently revived with a growing congregation, was gradually engulfed in flames.

Our late churchwarden's funeral had been due to take place the following morning, and we thank God that the firefighters were able and daring enough to rescue his coffin from the burning church.

Tony Simons had joined the serving team at the age of four. He was utterly and stubbornly committed to St Andrew's – so much so, it now appears he wanted to take the building with him when he died, still in office as our Churchwarden, aged 76. His funeral requiem went ahead the next day as planned, albeit not in the church that he had given so much to.

He was especially gifted in rallying volunteers every Saturday morning to look after the church garden, to go litter picking in the streets, or to polish some silver in the sacristy.

For Tony, these tasks weren't just about maintaining a historic building. These were acts of devotion to God, however small, to help make our corner of the world that little bit more worthy of Him.

For those of us who worship in the Catholic tradition, this is all the more pressing because the church building is not only a place of prayer, but a place where Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament.

For all of us Christians, however, the main priority for our places of worship is just that – worship – and it is for that reason that generations of volunteers have



poured their blood, sweat and tears into these buildings and cause them to survive for so long in the first place.

However, the new Fund seems to misunderstand this. Instead, applicants must meet Historic England's priorities to, for example, achieve a, 'sustainable future for historic places, including buildings, landscapes, archaeological sites, and marine assets', or ensure 'heritage plays an important role in the fight to limit and manage the effects of climate change'.

These may be worthy objectives, but they are not the Church's primary purpose.

When the Government's policy change was debated in the House of Lords, several peers highlighted the social value and, indeed, value for money that our places of worship provide, such as Foodbanks, art exhibition space, venues for musical activity and provision of children's groups. Using HM Treasury Green Book methodology, the National Churches Trust has calculated that church buildings provide £55 billion in social benefit to the UK every year.

This is impressive evidence of the Church's impact, but these benefits are ultimately byproducts of the Church's mission; namely the cure of souls.

It was Baroness Seccombe who reminded the Chamber of what we truly lost during the pandemic when, 'Priests were forbidden by their own bishops from entering the churches that they are called to love

and serve—even from ringing the bells to let people know that they were being prayed for'.

During that time, churchgoers were sent a clear message that the Church is not the building. This is of course true, insofar as we are members of the Body of Christ, which precedes any geographic or tribal identity.

Even so, kitchen tables simply weren't the same. Our parish churches, which are so often the local listed place of worship, have a special value in that they bridge the universal faith to a particular place.

Each church's unique history can connect us to those who have gone before us. For example, we might spot their names inscribed on memorials (or scribbled on quire stalls), who undoubtedly led quite different lives from us, but who likely prayed in the same pews about very similar things.

The layout of the building itself, perhaps lined with statues of the saints, stained-glass windows, and stations of the cross, acts as a spiritual aid as we journey from the font of baptism to the foot of the cross.

Heaven is our true native land, but our church buildings here on earth have a role to play in steering us towards its shore (a church's 'nave' comes from *navis*, the Latin word for ship).

St Andrew's is again without its church building, and whilst we are lucky to have the parish hall and services have resumed, we are finding this is also not quite the same.

Interestingly, it was responses from the wider Christian community which seemed to highlight the importance of the church building.

The morning after the fire, when we were still in shock with no idea how it happened or what we should do next, a Greek Orthodox neighbour knocked on the vicarage door. She did more than offer us sympathy. She gifted us her icon of Saint Andrew, attached with a letter expressing her hope that his intercession will grant us 'the fortitude and strength to successfully complete the restoration of his holy Church. My prayers remain with you until this holy work is accomplished'.



I knew in that moment that we had been given our instructions. We must rebuild.

A week later, a letter arrived from the Vatican assuring us not only of Pope Leo XIV's 'spiritual solidarity', but also of his, 'hope that services can return to the church as soon as possible'.

Their solidarity is a testament to the fact that the Church is indeed more than any one congregation or one building, but the letters themselves recognised that our church buildings do matter.

They have spiritual as well as historical and social value, explaining why their loss causes such pain, and what prompts people to help maintain them.

I'll never forget hearing the thunderous crashing of the mighty wooden beams, nor watching the embers rain down upon the pews. Yet, I'll also remember spotting through the smoke that the crucifix which sits atop the tabernacle was still standing. Even amidst what seemed like hellfire, God had not abandoned us.

I'll remember how other onlookers, some of whom had never stepped foot inside the church previously, where moved to urgent prayer at the sight. I'll remember how approximately 70 people, many complete strangers, turned up at 9am on a Saturday morning to help us clean and recover what we could. God was still calling people.

The Blessed Sacrament was retrieved unharmed and its wooden tabernacle and the wood-panelled Lady Chapel somehow escaped the flames. The image of Our Lady of Walsingham has suffered some damage, causing the image to look as though her face is marked by tears, but, even in this, she continues to point us to her Son. The brickwork is stable and there is much that can be repaired. No one was injured, and Tony was laid to rest in peace. We still have much to thank God for.

Looking ahead, it is expected that it will take around five years to rebuild the church, and we don't yet know how much money we'll need, or exactly how we should best adapt in the meantime. Nonetheless, we hold onto the same faith as those who first built it.

Finally, I hold onto hope that the Government might think again before taxing our efforts to repair this listed place of worship, and perhaps the Church of England itself might reflect on where its own funds ought to be spent.

For now, thank you to those readers who have already offered us their support, and to all those often-unsung heroes who look after our church buildings, of which all places are in need. Please do, along with Saint Andrew and Our Lady of Walsingham, continue to pray with us and for us. ND

Richard Arens is the Fidelium Representative for Our Most Holy Redeemer, Clerkenwell.

New at number 10

David Halpin **considers the role that Andy Burnham's Catholic faith might play in shaping his work as our Prime Minister**

On Wednesday 20 July, Andy Burnham became Britain's latest Prime Minister. Before giving a brief speech as PM in Downing Street, he greeted face-to-face many of his friends, supporter-activists, staffers and family members lined up outside Number 10. These included his octogenarian mother, Eileen, whom he kissed and embraced warmly.

Their affectionate hug, prolonged and mutually heart-felt, was shown live on television. Caught visibly on camera, but unremarked upon by any of those commentating, were Eileen Burnham's rosary beads, which she was plainly seen holding while praying for her son.

Centred on meditating on the Sacred Mysteries, the rosary, as all readers of *New Directions* know, is a cherished Catholic prayer tradition. Praying it deepens faith, drawing believers nearer to Christ, increasing their holiness as a result.

As a steadfast, life-long, Roman Catholic, Eileen's rosary beads have thus always been in her possession, purposefully close to hand. Burnham, who grew up under her religious influence (his father isn't a Christian), would surely have noticed them during their greeting. Indeed, in an interview conducted with him by *The Times* newspaper shortly before taking office, Burnham assumed their presence, saying his Mum would be, 'wearing her rosary beads out' to mark the historic moment.

While Burnham has more than once said that Catholicism is an important part of his life and his politics, causing him, when questioned, to self-identify as a Catholic, he does not practise his faith. Because he lacks a devotional life, in which regular attendance at Mass features strongly, some therefore have asked what kind of Catholic he is and what implications his faith might have for how he chooses to govern and the policy priorities he champions.

He's a Catholic who once thought it important enough to send his own three children to Roman Catholic schools. This connects with the career choice of one of his brothers, Nick, who currently runs Cardinal Newman College in Preston – one of the largest Catholic sixth-form providers in the North-West.

Burnham, however, is reported to have some difficulties with aspects of Catholic teaching, particularly on sexual morality, including gay rights. In 2015, in an interview with *Premier Christian News*, he said he had issues with Rome's teaching on contraception and homosexuality, describing it as overly judgemental, though it's likely he finds helpful Pope Leo's recent statement that 'the unity or division of the church should not revolve around sexual matters… [and that there are] more important issues such as justice, equality, [and] freedom of men and women'. Such issues, of course, articulate with Catholic Social teaching which Burnham has said 'underpins his politics'.



A strong hint of what this means in practice was outlined by Burnham in his 2025 Annual Lecture to *Theos*, the leading UK-based Christian think tank, in which he called for a new way of doing politics 'with trust, community, faith, and belief at his heart'. He also spoke on that occasion of the need to 'move from a crisis of trust to a culture of encounter', the last element of which he attributed to Leo's predecessor, Pope Francis, whom he had met at the Vatican two years previously, a coming together he called the 'greatest privilege of my life'.

Modern Catholic social teaching, which originated in 1891 with Pope Leo XIII's encyclical letter, *Rerum Novarum*, is a body of Catholic doctrine guiding how to build a just society, centred on human dignity, solidarity, and the common good. Rooted in Scripture, it applies faith to economic, political, and social life.

Burnham's Catholicism is likely to inform his conscience and thus the way he goes about doing things

It has seven 'core principles': *Human Dignity* – every person is made in God's image and deserves respect; *Solidarity* – we are one human family and must stand with the vulnerable; *Option for the Poor* – society must prioritize the needs of the poor and weak; *Rights and Responsibilities* – every person has basic rights and duties toward others; *Dignity of Work* – workers have rights to fair pay and safe conditions; *Care for Creation* – humans must act as good stewards of the Earth; *Community Participation* – families and communities must be supported and valued.

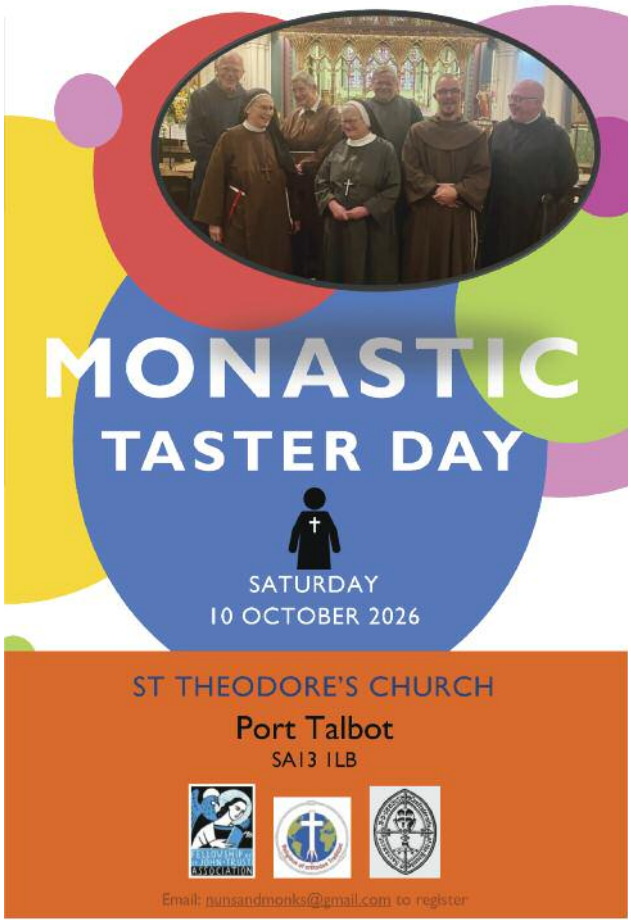
We might easily connect these principles with the sentiments expressed by Burnham in his *Theos* Lecture and see how they might provide him with a Catholic template for government. The leading Catholic cleric in England and Wales, the Archbishop of Westminster, Richard Moth, anticipated as much in an interview he gave recently to the BBC when he said that Burnham's Catholicism is likely to inform his conscience and thus the way he goes about doing things: 'we are going to see that real concern for humanity, not just on the grand scale, but for the needs of families and the homeless'. Burnham's recent declaration that it is important to fix palliative care before having a further assisted dying debate may also reflect his agreement with Rome's position which absolutely opposes legislation in this area.

Additionally, Pope Leo's calls for restraint in certain warring conflicts, notably in Ukraine and the Middle East, appear to coincide with Burnham's foreign policy intentions. Economically, Rome and Downing Street are on the same page, each inviting the citadels of financial capital to conduct themselves in ways that help better to narrow the ever-growing gap between the rich and the poor, within and between countries. More generally, Burnham's 'politics of hope' overlap strongly with the Catholic vision that neither cynicism nor pessimism is an orientation likely to lead to societal improvement, least of all raise people's morale and self-confidence.

Burnham's political journey is a reminder of the one travelled previously by an earlier leader of the British Labour Party, George Lansbury. An Anglican pacifist, who worshipped throughout his life at St Mary's Church (Bow Church) in Tower Hamlets, Lansbury was party leader for three years from 1932. He spent most of his political life campaigning for social justice, women's rights, and world disarmament. For over 30 years, from December 1910, he was the distinguished MP for Poplar, Bow and Bromley, where he lived modestly, working hard to alleviate constituents' impoverished circumstances. Never self-serving and guided always by his Christian principles, George was consistent in his efforts on behalf of the poorest in society, fostering hope through an unswerving engagement with issues of principle and character.

Is it too much to imagine that Burnham's Catholicism might achieve as much today? Not for Eileen Burnham, I'm thinking, who will surely say a prayer each day that her son's Catholic roots will yield good things for his country and its people. As she prays her rosary beads with our PM in mind, maybe we should wish him well too. ND

David Halpin worships at St Wilfrid's church, Harrogate.

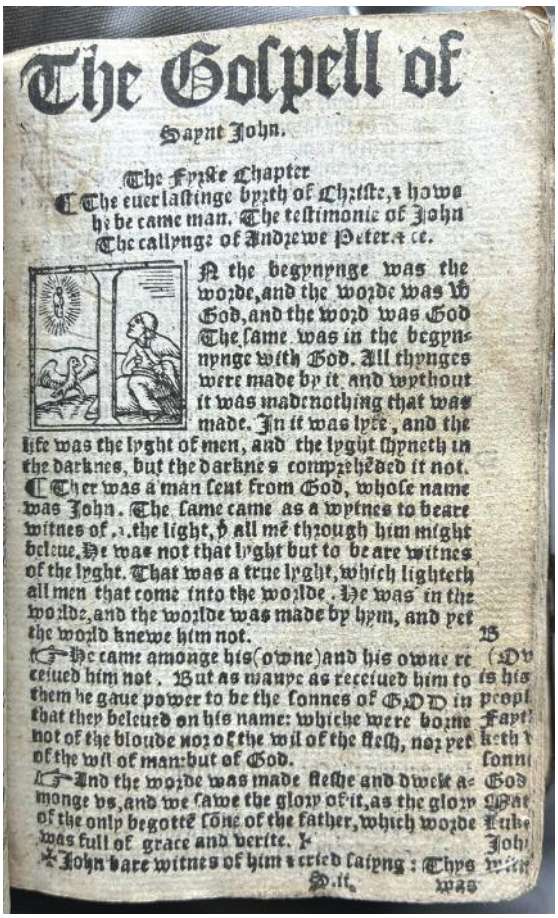


1526: Two books of the Reformation

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the first printing of the English translation of the New Testament by William Tyndale, *Gudrun Warren* writes about a publication that was hugely significant in its own day and continues to resonate 500 years later.

William Tyndale was born around 1494, in Gloucestershire, of a reasonably well-to-do family. He demonstrated great aptitude with languages, ultimately speaking seven languages. It is believed he may have used Erasmus' edition of the New Testament in Greek (published in 1516), sharing it with fellow students at Cambridge in an informal study group. It may have been this which sparked his ambition to translate the New Testament from Greek into English. His aim in doing so was to bring the Bible to as many people as possible and in a translation that was derived directly from the original language.

At the time Tyndale made this decision, it was illegal to produce a vernacular translation of the Bible in England – the only country of western Europe where this was the case at that time, as England was still bound by the Constitutions of Oxford, issued in 1408. A Bible was printed in German around 1466, and there had been around 14 separate printings of the Bible in German before Luther's Bible of 1522. Following this, first Italian Bible, translated from Latin, was printed in 1471, French in around 1474, and Catalan in 1478.



The Gospell of

Sayntt John.

The Fyrste Chapter

¶ The euerlastinge byrth of Chrisste, & howe he be came man. The testimonie of John The callynge of Andrewe Peter. &c.

IN the begynnynge was the worde, and the worde was wt God, and the word was God The same was in the begynnynge with God. All thynges were made by it and wythout it was made nothing that was made. In it was lyfe, and the life was the lyght of men, and the lyght shyneth in the darknes, but the darknes comprehended it not.

¶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came as a witnes to beare witnes of the light, that all me through him might beleue. He was not that lyght but to beare witnes of the lyght. That was a true lyght, which lighteth all men that come into the worlde. He was in the worlde, and the worlde was made by hym, and yet the world knewe him not.

¶ He came amonge his (owne) and his owne re ceiued him not. But as many as receiued him to them he gaue power to be the sonnes of GOD in that they beleued on his name: whiche were borne not of the bloude nor of the will of the flesh, nor yet of the will of man: but of God.

¶ And the worde was made flesche and dwelt a monge vs, and we sawe the glory of it, as the glory of the only begotte sone of the father, which worde was full of grace and verite. ¶

*John bare witnes of him & cried sayeng: This was

The prologue of the Gospel of St John from a 1549 edition of Tyndale's New Testament

Tyndale proposed an English translation at a particularly difficult time: Luther's works began to enter England from 1520 and the authorities were deeply concerned by the threat posed to religious and secular stability. Translation provided one route by which heretical ideas could pervade, as the choice of words could be influenced by religious viewpoint. Tyndale was, therefore, unable to find support for his project and left for the continent.

His translation was being printed in Cologne in 1525 when the print shop was raided, and only some sheets were saved. These represented the gospel of Matthew, as far as Chapter 22 and the work went into circulation in this state. The first complete copy of Tyndale's English New Testament was printed in Worms (modern Germany) early in 1526. It was banned in England in October 1526, at which time the Bishop of London organised a public burning of the work. Only two incomplete copies of the 1526 New Testament survive in this country; one further and complete copy survive in Germany.

Tyndale continued writing, with most of his work now being published in Antwerp, including a revised edition of the New Testament in 1534. He learnt Hebrew and began work on translating the Old Testament into English. He had completed and issued some portions when he was betrayed to the authorities, arrested and incarcerated; he made a plea in a letter to be allowed a Hebrew grammar and dictionary, pen, paper and light so that he could work in his cell. He was charged with heresy (as a follower of Luther) and executed in October 1536.

The work of translating the Bible into English continued: in 1535 Miles Coverdale issued a complete Bible, incorporating Tyndale's work; then in 1537 the Matthew Bible began to circulate – it claimed the authorship of 'Thomas Matthew', a pseudonymous ascription relying on the names of two of Jesus' apostles and in fact the work of John Rogers. It, too, used Tyndale's translations where available. Finally bowing to public pressure, the authorities in England authorised the use of the Matthew Bible, until such time as the bishops could provide their own preferred translation.

That edition arrived in the form of the Great Bible, first published in 1539, and the first Bible in English to be authorised for use and still using Tyndale's work. The Great Bible remained the authorised Bible of the Church of England until it was superseded by the Bishops' Bible, first published in 1568. The King James, or Authorised Version of the Bible of 1611 retained, scholars estimating possibly as much as 80% of Tyndale's work being represented in the King James Bible. Both the popularity and the controversy of Tyndale's translation derives from the way he rendered the



This image of St Birgitta receiving her revelations from Bonde's *The Pilgrimage of Perfection* was often used in publications by English Bridgettine brothers

original Biblical languages into English, using accessible, popular vocabulary; many of his words and phrases continue in popular usage today and it is suggested that he is responsible for more popular phrases than can be ascribed to Shakespeare. As already mentioned, the controversial aspect is that the words he selected to render some terms carried theological and ecclesiological significance placing him in a particular alignment in Reformation politics and thus rendering him even less acceptable to the authorities.

A second book first published in the same year is considerably less well known: The Pilgrimage of Perfection, by William Bonde (1480/5-1532). Bonde was born in Northumberland and educated at Cambridge, where he was Fellow firstly of Queens' College, and then of Pembroke College. He left the academic world around 1510 to become a Bridgettine brother.

The Bridgettine Order was founded by St Bridget of Sweden (1302 or 3 – 1373). She had a conventional marriage and bore eight children, then after the death of her husband, she responded to a mystical revelation to become a bride of Christ. One of the revelations she received was the instruction to found a new Order of the Most Holy Saviour (the name she gave to it); the first house was established in Vadstena, Sweden. The Order followed a Rule based on the Rule of St Augustine, with amendments inspired by the *Regula* which was divinely revealed to Birgitta and had double monasteries – houses for both women and men. Her vision was for 13 brothers to provide pastoral and sacramental support to a community of 60 nuns.

There has only been a single Bridgettine house in England: Syon Abbey was founded in 1415 by King Henry V at Twickenham, although it moved later in the 15th century to Isleworth. In the 1520s, Syon Abbey appears to have undertaken a conscious campaign to publish works in support of the orthodox position of the Catholic Church; the Abbey's position also verged on the political. In 1535, a Bridgettine brother, Richard Reynolds, was executed on Tower Hill for refusing to swear the Oath of Succession.

Syon Abbey was famous for its library: the brothers were drawn from academic circles and were encouraged to donate books to the library when they entered the community, and the nuns were allowed to read as many books as they wanted. Five Bridgettine brothers have been identified as contributing writings, one of whom was William Bonde.

William Bonde wrote two works for publication, which ensured a wider circulation beyond the confines of the Bridgettine community. They were The Pilgrimage of Perfection (two editions of 1526 and 1531) and Directory of Conscience (1527). The Pilgrimage of Perfection is a guide to living a good, Christian life. It is primarily intended for a religious audience (those who have made a commitment to an Order or community life), although parts of it would also be applicable to devout laity. However, Bonde makes very clear that he considers attempting to live a good life outside of a religious community to be almost impossible because of the range of temptations and the lack of support provided by a community and a Rule of Life.

The inspiration for the title came from an earlier work by Walter Hilton, Scale (or ladder) of Perfection. Hilton's work is much more mystical than Bonde's; it has been suggested that while Bonde sought to guide his reader towards full contemplative experience, he probably never felt he attained that state for himself, so he is unable to convey a sense of how it feels. However, he is writing at a time when there are still relatively few guides to contemplative life, particularly for the laity, and the fact that his work passed through two editions in five years suggests its popularity.

The book reflects contemporary religious and political issues. Bonde refers extensively to the Holy Name of Jesus, which was a focus for veneration particularly from the 12th century. Richard Rolle, the 14th century mystic, was an adherent. It began as a votive Mass, then developed an Office, and in the latter part of the 15th century in began to appear as a Feast in English missals, often on 7 August (the day after the Feast of the Transfiguration). Some of Bonde's comments on the nature of a good ruler are considered to demonstrate how concerned the Bridgettines were that Henry VIII was no longer meeting those high standards.

The Bridgettine house of Syon remained staunchly Catholic, and one of their brethren was executed by Henry VIII; Tyndale espoused the Protestant cause and was also executed. Bonde and Tyndale represent different sides of the Reformation, but both were seeking to put an apparatus for personal faith into the hands of individuals, to help their spiritual lives to flourish. This remains a valid pastoral goal today, 500 years later, and their books still exist to bear witness to the long history of this endeavour. ND

Gudrun Warren is the Librarian at Norwich Cathedral.

‘Windsor Report’ launched on clergy vocations, training and retention

We need to reclaim the Anglican vision of Priesthood, writes *Emma Thompson*

The Church of England urgently needs action to address the fall in clergy numbers. Priests are not being ordained at the rate required to sustain parish ministry. On 3 September 2026 at the House of Lords, Save the Parish (STP) launched what we refer to as the ‘Windsor Report’, entitled: ‘Addressing the Crisis in Stipendiary Clergy Numbers in the Church of England’. This was based on a residential consultation in Windsor convened by STP and chaired by the Right Revd Martin Seeley, former theological college principal and Diocesan bishop. The event gathered leaders from across the Church to identify systemic problems in vocations, clergy training and retention, and to propose practical solutions.

The discussion’s backdrop was: declining clergy and ordinand numbers; near-bankrupt dioceses cutting stipendiary posts and large numbers of ordained priests being in purely administrative roles. STP brought together participants from varied traditions to consider positively how to inspire vocations, train clergy effectively and support them in ministry. There was striking consensus on the nature of the crisis and how to address it.

Anglo-Catholics and liberal Catholics should, I feel, be natural supporters of STP although STP’s supporters are from a breadth of traditions. Our movement defends a sacramental priesthood rooted in place; a parish ecclesiology that treats every community as worthy of pastoral care; deep theological formation grounded in long-established traditions; and a stable stipendiary ministry with a succession plan, capable of sustaining daily prayer, liturgy and local pastoral care. In an era of centralisation, managerialism and clergy cuts, STP is fighting for the incarnational, sacramental, socially-rooted, locally-present Church that we feel the Church of England is called to be.

The figures

The National Director for Ministry kindly shared the latest stipendiary clergy statistics at Windsor. Numbers have declined steadily since 1960, when the Church had 14,603 stipendiary ministers. By 2026, this had fallen to 6,682. Nearly half – 3,153 – are over 55, meaning they will retire within 15 years under the generally applied retirement age of 70.

There are also 8,368 retired clergy holding Permission to Officiate (PTO) and 2,440 self-supporting ministers. The fact that clergy with PTO (in a narrow age band of 70+) strongly outnumber stipendiary clergy illustrates the scale of decline.

For the first time, Ministry Statistics recorded resignations: 379 clergy left ministry in the past year, 36% more than the number retiring (278), making a total loss of 657 clergy. Meanwhile, ordinands in 2025 numbered only 417. The Church reported at General Synod in July 2025 that potential ordinands in theological education institutions (TEIs) were down 40% since 2019.

Clergy wellbeing crisis

Anglican ordination is for life, so why are clergy resigning? Many parishes repeatedly advertise for vicars, yet clergy are not queuing for posts. Significant numbers have walked away from ministry.

Morale has been damaged by changes driven by expanding diocesan administrations. Anxiety about job security is on the increase. Administrative workload is the single greatest source of stress. The Windsor Report states that clergy are, ‘drowning under burdens of administration’, eroding their capacity for the Cure of Souls and making them feel unable to fulfil their vocation. The Living Ministry study (2025) showed that 28% of clergy do not feel they are fulfilling their vocation, 29% show signs of depression, 40% feel isolated, and only 42% say they are living comfortably financially.

In 2022, Bishop Martin Seeley highlighted at General Synod the discrepancy between ambitious national mission programmes – which require stable clergy numbers – and diocesan attempts to save money by cutting stipendiary posts. The Church’s own growth studies, including, ‘From Anecdote to Evidence’ and ‘Going Deeper’, as well as pilot schemes in Wigan and Leicester, show that reducing stipendiary clergy creates a, ‘doom loop’, driving decline in attendance and donations Cutting stipendiary clergy is therefore a false economy and a contradictory strategy. Yet many dioceses continue to cut posts and merge parishes, leaving remaining clergy stretched thinly across multiple parish churches and communities. This creates ‘impossible jobs’, accelerating burnout.

Many dioceses are adopting a model styled, ‘Oversight Ministry’, despite its lack of basis in Canon Law and its tension with the clergy’s Ordinal vows. This model relies heavily on volunteer lay, ‘focal ministers’ to take services. At a hearing in Truro on 13 May, I spoke against a proposal to merge six benefices (previously with six vicars) and 22 places of worship into one mega-benefice, replacing the six stipendiary roles with two priests – one an Oversight Minister, one a Pioneer Minister who does not take Sunday services – and an interim priest for three years. It was unclear how this met the legal requirement of providing, ‘the better Cure of Souls’. Despite intense opposition from local people seeking sacramental ministry and pastoral care, from PCCs and Patrons who practically and

theologically objected to the model, and despite suspicion that the real motivation for the proposed scheme was financial, sadly the Church Commissioners approved the scheme.

It defies logic to increase reliance on volunteers when volunteering is falling nationally and fails to provide sacramental ministry. Heavy reliance on retired clergy is unsustainable given falling numbers. Only 37% of active clergy are now stipendiary. Studies show that poor communities are most likely to have their churches closed and suffer most when that happens.

The Windsor Report notes that the burden of decline is felt deeply by clergy. One Living Ministry respondent wrote: 'Since becoming an incumbent of seven rural parishes, I've had the worst ill-health of my adult life'.

Problems

This crisis is driven by insufficient resources going into traditional priesthood. STP is campaigning for spending on parish ministry to become again the Church's top priority. The Church's own published figures show that in 2024 only 13% of historic funding intended for parish ministry was actually spent on it. Historic central and diocesan endowments totalled £17.2bn, with returns of £653m; yet only £85m was applied to their original purpose. The Church's current spending and deployment policy – the 'Vision and Strategy' (never debated or authorised bv the General Synod) – has deprioritised parish ministry and focused resources on creating 10,000 'new worshipping communities'.

Large sums have been spent on speculative new projects. Yet independent reports show woeful outcomes. Catholics should note a clear tradition bias: the 2024 'New Things' report showed that, of 900 projects started under these schemes, 'only five sit within the Anglo-Catholic or liberal catholic traditions'. 1}

The Windsor Report identified problems in the route to ordination and ministry under six headings. The Windsor Consultation united a broad cross-section of the Church: parish clergy, bishops, theologians, TEI principals, lecturers, archdeacons, Diocesan Directors of Ordinands, representatives of the English Clergy Association, and specialists in mission, wellbeing and journalism. Many participants said they had never before taken part in such a wide-ranging church discussion with such a mixed group. STP was praised for its ability to convene voices across the Church.

It was agreed that the Church has seemingly lost confidence in priesthood. Financial and structural barriers deter many candidates from pursuing stipendiary ministry. Clergy training has become overly functional, with theological, Biblical and liturgical formation squeezed out. The blurred boundary between IME1 and IME2 (formation for ordinands and curates) means essential learning is pushed into curacy, with training expertise often unavailable. Clergy morale is low, trust in leadership has been eroded by managerial models, numerical metrics and competitive funding directed at favoured tradition. Better support structures – alongside ending enforced retirement at 70 – are needed to sustain clergy wellbeing.

Proposed solutions

The Windsor Report and the STP Manifesto for October's General Synod election both identify that a joyful, supported priest is the most effective 'vocations officer'. It was agreed at Windsor that, to address the crisis in priestly identity, the Church needs a renewed theological vision, rooted in tradition and orientated toward mission.

Recommendations for action included:

- Improving IME 1 & 2
- Removing financial and age barriers to ordination training
- Creating an Anglican basics course to strengthen identity and confidence
- Changing metrics of 'success' to reduce burnout and unrealistic expectations
- A covenant of care for clergy, addressing wellbeing and retention.

A national framework is needed to fund both residential and non-residential training. Residential colleges must be valued for immersing ordinands in Anglican tradition and teaching them to live alongside people of different opinions/backgrounds/traditions.

A proposed national Anglican basics course – taught locally and supported online – would reclaim theological depth by giving prospective ordinands pre-selection grounding in Scripture, liturgy, theology, ecclesiology and history.

Participants urged a shift toward parish-rooted measures of ministry: valuing a relational, well-being focused model: not managerially-quantifiable. The Church must rediscover, 'deep Anglicanism', emphasising theological, liturgical and pastoral wisdom as the basis for a, 'covenant of care' to support (and, crucially, retain) clergy.

Support structures must improve: ordinands need long-term study groups; clergy need mentors – ideally trained retired priests – without assessment roles. Retired clergy, who provide around half of services, must be valued. Dioceses should halt clergy cuts, as dioceses expressly protecting stipendiary posts can rebuild trust and attract clergy.

The deeper issue is a crisis of priestly identity. The Church needs a confident, renewed vision of Anglican Priesthood: a coherent theological vision rooted in tradition and oriented to mission. A national conference—possibly at Ridley Hall—was proposed. The Windsor Report draws on the idea of returning to foundational sources to recover a shared ecclesial story.

STP will continue convening voices, produce materials commending parish ministry and partner with a theological college on a proposed conference and debate on the nature of Anglican ordained ministry.

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Praying with Blessed John Henry Newman

Exploring the prayers of Newman in anticipation of his feast day

At the beginning of the year I was the beneficiary of a three-month sabbatical (thanks to the Diocese of Blackburn) during which I committed myself to praying the prayers of Newman as a way of discerning more about my share in the vocation of priest and servant of the Church.



I'm not the only priest to acknowledge Newman's part in my own vocation. It was the hymn, *Lead, kindly light* which stopped me in my tracks many years ago in York Minster; I needed to be told that, 'one step was, and is, enough for me'.

In the years since, I have come to love the transparency of Newman whose sainthood manifests the truths of God to whom he prays in the following words:

'O God, Thou dost over-abound in mercy
To live by faith is my necessity
From my present state of being and from my sin;
but Thou hast pronounced a blessing on it'.

Within these few words he gives away the foundation of all Christian discipleship that faith in Christ and his Church is our 'necessity'. In other words, our only real and living hope of salvation. Newman clarifies that salvation is literally, to be saved from the consequences of sin which affect the entirety of life; our 'present state of being'.

Newman cannot testify without a sobering frankness about the human predicament. The consequences of human sin can never be exaggerated. Redemption will be a hard journey and there will be conflict, but Newman's language is not that of tub-thumping damnation, rather he presents this hand-in-hand with the 'kindliness' of God who 'over-abounds in mercy' and who 'never ceases to communicate personally, heart to heart'.

His prayer holds together awe and intimacy with a constant emphasis on the need to personalise our faith. He continues to pray, 'give me to share…enable me to believe as if I saw…Let me have Thee always before me…my hidden…my living God'.

There is no bland 'us' in Newman. To keep the personal in a faithful relationship with the 'Eternal, incomprehensible God…infinitely more wonderful, resourceful and immense than the universe I see' he uses what he calls, 'appropriate titles' to define the nature of the relationship between Man and God.

Newman insists that it is essential for us to 'cultivate' the right approach to God; to find that 'stance of reverence'. God who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, cannot be 'a God of accidental, random, private courses in the execution of His will, but of determinate, regulated, prescribed action – they went forth in peace and in the name of Christ'.

This 'cultivation' of the right approach to God requires us to identify trends which would compromise our desire or thirst for God. There is a natural desire for the heart to know the objective truth of God but there are ever-present threats to this, seen in hearts which become resigned to, 'ever-changing subjective definitions which can only close down the desire or thirst for God'.

Staying on the right side of this conflict is won by devotion to the Sacred Heart. By his prayer, 'O Sacred Heart of Jesus' we can experience how a cleansing, purifying, saving work is set in motion.

Newman calls God his 'amiable Saviour' – two words which, if on their own, would unsettle the right kind of relationship he asks us to 'cultivate'. The heart of Jesus as an ever-active fount of saving love is explicitly shared in his use of the following words:

'consume my heart
with that burning fire
with which your Heart
is ever-inflamed'.

The saving purpose of being reconciled to God is expressed simply when he pleads with God to 'pour down on my soul those graces which flow from your Love –
and let my heart be so united with Yours
that our wills may be one;
and mine in all things, be conformed to Yours.
May your divine will be equally the standard
and rule of all my desires and of all my actions'.

Experienced Christian hearts will be continually moved by these words, but so will hearts which have never heard Christ's love for them described before. The newcomer can also be touched by the vision they inspire.

When we turn our minds to using Newman to introduce the mystery of Christ to the newcomer there is no need to fear that his work is way beyond the capacity of 'ordinary people'. He does not countenance any kind of patronising minimalism aimed at class, age or experience. Simple, shared integrity is the most likely advocate of the Spirit in friendships, which he explained as being the most natural form of evangelism. He doesn't concoct prayer for the beginner and super-prayer for the experienced; he simply prays. His words are forged by an encounter with the Person of Christ in such a way that, like all saints, he becomes a window onto Christ who Himself will see to the details of how He chooses to relate to enquiring hearts.

This is consistent with the voice of his prayer being one of constant conversion, hence his directing of the Christian heart towards the fruits of the lanced and Sacred Heart received in the offering the Mass:

'Thou art concealed in the holy Eucharist
and thou beatest for us still…
Thou for a while takest up Thy abode within me
O make me heart beat with Thy Heart
Purify it…of all disorder
Fill it with Thee…that in Thy love and fear
it may have peace'.

Everyday pastoral ministry brings to light the questions and doubts about the efficacy or even the point of prayer and intercession; 'it didn't do anything for…' etc. but in Newman we have a saint who can change perspective in a matter of lines. At one point he talks about prayer for peace and how cheaply we imagine it can be obtained.

He does the same when it comes to questions about sickness and suffering where we hear his call to place the conversion of our own heart as our priority so that we can then see how, 'the imbalances in the world today are in fact symptoms of a deeper imbalance in the human heart'.

His own pastoral ministry had made him all too aware of the dreadful sickness and suffering undergone by so many people and so he concluded that, 'All is nothing compared with that dreadful sickness of the soul we call sin…the sufferings in the world around us are all the effects of it; they are all shadows of it'.

This may be sobering but it lifts the burden of praying minds that become locked in despondency and even disillusion with their God. Newman's grip on the reality of the human condition meant he was able to separate prayer from wishful thinking. Again, this will come, if well-taught, as a relief to many in our parishes.

The humanity of Newman is also shaped by his understanding of how easily we distort even the purest experiences of God's grace. He uses the language of 'refraction' to describe the inevitable corruption of grace once it has entered the fray of our sin. However, rather like his teaching on conscience, enough remained for it to become effective.

His prayers reveal the human heart as the focal point of the Sacred Heart's love. Christian hearts do not need to be as much 'trained' as 'cultivated' to listen.

There is a common acceptance that much of the Church of England's language about vocation and ministry has become too functional, focusing heavily on task-related activity and dependent on strategic activities rather than the formation of Christ's calling in the soul.

For Newman, the language of 'cultivation' keeps us away from Christian discipleship becoming solely about the acquiring of information and instead directed us towards a living association with the life of Christ behind the actions of his body, the Church. It speaks of a much more intimate relationship with and in Christ; to spiritually inhabit the life the Lord whose presence we are called to embody.

Formation is essentially about exposure to the Lord in a way which is dependent on obedience and fidelity. In time, this brings about, in his own words, 'formation of a character'. He was a keen student of St Augustine who said, 'For the sake of the soul, which is the true self, we should not neglect the cultivation of the mind, which is the seat of wisdom'.

Newman went on to speak of 'inner cultivation' – allowing God to cultivate His will within the Christian soul. In his 'Prayer for Wisdom' he first acknowledges that God 'alone can quicken my hearing, and purge my sight, and cleanse and renew my heart. Teach me, like Mary, to sit at your feet, and to hear your word. Give me that true wisdom, which seeks your will by prayer and meditation, by direct intercourse with you, more than by reading and reasoning'.

The language of cultivation leads us to experience how our inner life shapes the life of Christ's body, the Church.

The more I prayed the prayers of Newman the more I realised how the Church's ministry of prayer and intercession needs constant revising, not by a liturgical commission but by spiritual directors, shepherds and confessors with a sober evaluation of the human condition; absolute dependence on God; obedience; purpose; holiness; an understanding of the place of conflict; cultivating the right approach to God; these are all aspects of vocation being formed.

As we continue to live out our witness to the Catholic faith, borne out of our experience of Jesus at the altar, we will also continue to face incomprehension and at times conflict. It will only be in the how we pray that these radically divergent experiences of vocation will be possible to live with. St John Henry Newman, Doctor of the Church, pray for us.

ND

Guy Jamieson is Vicar of St Paul and St Mary's churches, Nelson, East Lancashire, in the Diocese of Blackburn.

A family affair

A report from the Beverley Festival by *Hanna Hart*

On Saturday 18 July, the family of parishes in the See of Beverley once again came together on a beautiful summer's day pilgrimage to the great city of York and its glorious Minster.

The well-filled nave gathered a great assortment of participants from all 10 mainland Dioceses of the See and many visitors from further afield. There were proud parents with gangly teenagers, retired bishops' wives, angelic sleeping babies, dark religious habits, round ladies in bright colours and young men in three-piece suits. And we were all welcomed by the fresh-faced students from the home team at St Laurence's, York.

As the organ swelled and the great procession turned the corner at the back of the nave, we all realised that Bishop Stephen himself would clearly win the hat and manteletta parade of the day. The skilled servers from Horbury led the great line of clergy towards the altar, under the lofty high medieval arches of limestone, the colour of sunshine and the excellent organist thundered the first hymn prelude. Aided by Fr John Livseley's wonderful choir of singers from across the See, we heartily joined in the worship of God and the holy communion of body, mind and spirit that is the Beverley Festival Mass.

As in every good family the children were especially embraced. They were provided with a soft play corner for the youngest and a choice of activities. Some built a church out of colourful blocks, and some found interesting things in their *Swag Bags*. As always, their youth and energy brought extra life and joy to the occasion, some playing in the aisles and some happily staying in their seats. Some astonishingly confident children even climbed into the raised ambo to read lessons and lead us in the intercessions, some with their noses hardly reaching above the desk, while when our Bishop entered the great pulpit to preach, his golden mitre only just fitted under the canopy.

The sermon took the day's theme, 'Go, rebuild my church', this year being the 800th anniversary of the death of Saint Francis of Assisi.

> 'Today…we meet in worship and fellowship as followers of Jesus Christ, seeking to serve him from within our own unique context and through our own unique charism within the Church of England as we hear the same request that St Francis did eight centuries ago, "Francis, Francis, go repair My church which, as you can see, is falling into ruins". He heard this request while praying before an Icon of Christ Crucified'.

Bishop Stephen went on to tell us how the Gospel St Francis proclaimed, together with a courageous life lived in poverty and humility and the gift of the stigmata, was so attractive to people. It was a sign of his





Christlikeness, an imitation of Christ in his suffering. In the epistle, St Paul prayed that he would never, 'boast of anything except the Cross of our Lord Jesus'. He also carried, 'the marks of Jesus' branded on his body. And hearing the Gospel we need to ask ourselves how we participate in the building and repairing of the Church. What marks of suffering are we prepared to carry if we are to bear the Cross and boast in nothing but the Cross?

Bishop Stephen continued:

> 'Francis did not have a plan of action…all he had was a desire to become Christlike. The Church will be repaired and rebuilt in the North of England and beyond if we can embrace St Francis' attitude and desires which were St Paul's too…boasting only in the cross of Christ and bearing his wounds leads us all more deeply into the gifts that proclaim that ross and those wounds – the sacraments of Baptism, and the Eucharist, the sacraments of Confirmation, Marriage, Unction, Reconciliation and Holy Orders. Through them we become more Christlike and…in every generation the Church is repaired and rebuilt'.

Edified by the sermon, we then shared our sacred family meal, sharing in the Eucharist and participating in Christ himself. After reverently removing his great mitre, our beloved bishop presided at the table of grace, with the great host of clergy from around the See concelebrating. Afterwards the great procession spilled out onto the pavement under the great west façade and after a last blessing we went on to joyfully greet friends and loved ones from near and far.

After a break for lunch, ice cream and an amble through the Shambles and the streets of the marvellous walled city of York, the day continued at the little medieval hall church of All Saints on North Street.

Fr Chris Brading SSC, national missioner for The Society, continued the day's theme of, 'Go, rebuild my church', with his encouraging and thought-provoking talk, 'Everybody's Got a Hungry Heart – Feeding Mission in Society Parishes'. He reminded us to have confidence, that even with small resources we can give that personal invitation that truly works, 'Jesus didn't recruit disciples through advertising campaigns; it often began with one person saying to another, "Come and see."'

Edified by the sermon, we then shared our sacred family meal, sharing in the Eucharist and participating in Christ himself.

As Fr Chris exhorted the hearers:

> 'Mission isn't another committee. It isn't another project. It's the natural overflow of people who've discovered Christ is alive and it's an imperative given us by the Lord himself.

Francis understood something we can all too easily forget: he didn't simply tell people about Jesus. He helped them encounter him.'

Soon, the late afternoon sunshine turned to golden streaks through the incense and the dark-wood pews groaned when the congregation knelt down to worship, peering ahead through the crowd and the rood-screen to worship our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament while vespers were sung, again beautifully aided by the choir. So, the day ended with the family of the See of Beverley gathered in great splendour and worship, just as it had started. ND

Understanding young adult journeys to faith in the Church of England

Unpacking a recently published report from *Theos*

The report, published on 23 July 2026, explores new young adult journeys to the Church of England, drawing on the stories of 30 individuals aged 18–30 who began attending an Anglican church for the first time in the five years following the Covid-19 pandemic.

There are a number of different opportunities for learning from this report, particularly for churches in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. The report begins by acknowledging the potential difficulties with the *Quiet Revival* report from the Bible Society in 2025 but states that there is a clear trend of young adults making these journeys to faith and that they appear to be 'spiritually curious'. This in itself is something which should make us think: how are we appealing to and connecting with that curiosity? There is also a statement that all the young adults (whatever form their journey may have taken) have a consistent appreciation for worship which has within it, 'confidence', 'seriousness' and 'authenticity'. These too should be words on which we dwell as we consider our approach to young adult ministry.

young adult saying that it was these which, 'directly converted him'

The 30 young adults interviewed had all grown up without attending Church of England churches and had a near total lack of knowledge about Christianity before starting to attend regularly (at least monthly). This sense of disconnection seems to have created a 'blank slate' from which faith can be experienced.

It should always be interesting to us, how people come to attend church for the first time. The pathways these young adults took are certainly noteworthy; over half conveyed that Christian content on social media had exposed them to faith and influenced them in some way; many said they had started reading the Bible independently before attending church; some described spiritual encounters and even a sense of being 'called' to church; many referenced a specific individual with whom they had a relationship who played a mediating role in their journey. Some consideration of these pathways may be useful in our various contexts, particularly what our output is like on social media and how we make Scripture available to those who may just pass through our buildings, as well as helping them navigate Scripture once they are reading it.

When it comes to choosing a Church of England church to attend, one of the overriding factors was feeling drawn to the aesthetics, history, liturgy and worship. The BCP is specifically referenced as influential. Those who attended Anglo-Catholic or 'high churches' said they had created their own daily offices, drawing on a variety of traditions. This too should be of interest to us and inspire us to think about how we promote and publicise the praying of the daily office and opportunities to join in by a variety of means; hybrid or online.

When it comes to those who settled within Anglo-Catholic churches, the qualities of being 'quiet' and 'reflective' are highlighted. Those young adults commented on the sacraments being at the heart of their faith – naming the Eucharist and Confession with one young adult saying that it was these which, 'directly converted him'. Opening up, not just the Eucharistic life of the Church, but the richness of the other sacraments, particularly Confession, should provide further food for thought.

A strong sense of community was highlighted by all as a fundamental need when choosing a church. In addition to this, there is a very interesting section in the report on masculinity. For the male participants in the study, they were able to find in churches a 'purpose and belonging that they felt to be lacking in a secular context'. The church offering a unique space where, for example those who weren't into sport, as men, could also find community and find support through men-only groups. The men also talked about church as a place where it was acceptable to express emotion. It is notable that in other reporting about increasing numbers of young adults, it is often particularly young men who are in the majority. Are there specific ways in which our churches can respond to these needs identified by male participants in this study; belonging, support and a place to express emotion?

The final section of the report uses a phrase well-known to many in the Catholic tradition of, 'full-fat faith'. The report notes that it the phrase itself does not feature in the interviews but relates to much of the content. The phrase, 'can be used on both the evangelical and high church ends of the spectrum – forms of worship which are either charismatic and focused on Scripture, or those which emphasise the sacraments and traditional liturgy. While "full-fat faith" can be interpreted in such different ways, the implication is clear: the more unapologetic the expression of faith, the greater its appeal'. This is of primary interest to those within the Catholic tradition as we seek to make our sacramental tradition unapologetic.

Hopefully this short article has at least provided space to consider some of the key, relevant findings. The report can be found on the Church Support Hub website if this has sparked your interest. ND

Putting down roots:
Fidelium and Forward in Faith

Fidelium is delighted to announce a new partnership with Forward in Faith, marking an important step in the development of Fidelium and helping to secure our work for the years ahead.

Over the past 18 months, Fidelium has grown rapidly as a network bringing together young adults for worship, formation and fellowship in the catholic tradition of the Church of England. Our monthly Mass and pub event continues to attract new people on each occasion, while growing a strong core of regular attendees. Our women's group continues to thrive, providing young women in the Anglo-Catholic tradition with a single-sex space in which to read Scripture, pray and socialise together. Our network of Parish Representatives also continues to grow: we now have 15 across the See of Fulham, spanning both the Dioceses of London and Southwark, helping to facilitate outreach and evangelism to young adults at a local parochial level. Increasingly, young adults are also approaching us asking to be connected with a local parish church where they can prepare for and receive the sacraments of initiation.

As Fidelium has grown, so too has the need to put our work on a firmer and more sustainable footing. Following several months of consultation and revision, we have adopted our first Constitution and entered into a formal partnership with Forward in Faith. Under the new arrangement, supporters will be able, for the first time, to donate directly towards Fidelium's work. Donations can be made in the usual way to Forward in Faith, simply adding 'Fidelium' to the transaction reference so that the gift is allocated to our ring-fenced account. Forward in Faith will hold and administer these funds on Fidelium's behalf, giving us a straightforward and accountable way of managing our finances while allowing Fidelium to continue to be governed autonomously by its own Committee under its Constitution.

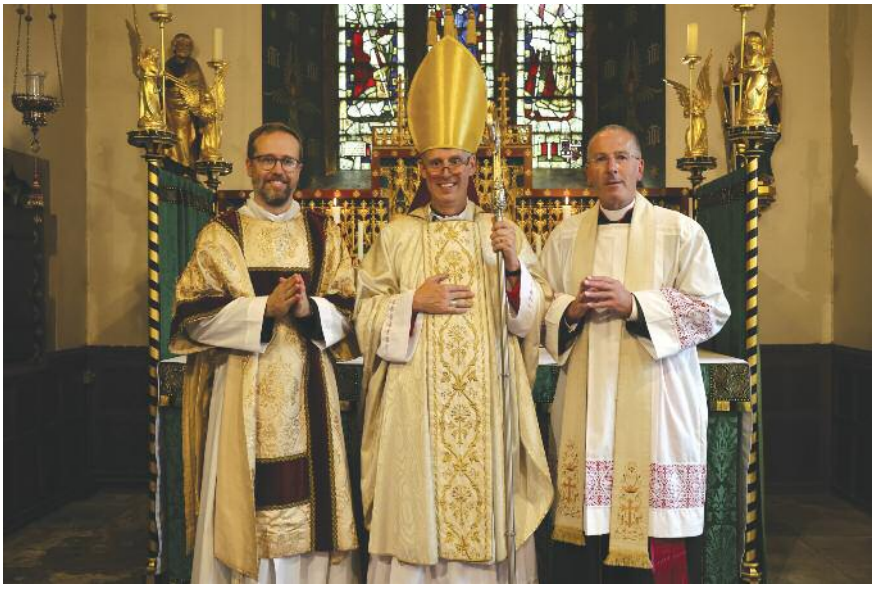
Forward in Faith is also supporting our safeguarding arrangements. Its Director, Tom Middleton, has been appointed Fidelium's Safeguarding Lead, providing an experienced point of contact and helping to ensure that safeguarding is properly embedded in the life of the network. Fr Philip Corbett continues to serve as our Chaplain, providing pastoral and spiritual support to the network and guidance to the Committee as Fidelium develops. The Bishop of Fulham also remains our Patron and has been closely involved in the development of our new Constitution. We are immensely grateful to both Fr Philip and Bishop Jonathan for their continued support and encouragement of our work.

Alongside the announcement of this new partnership, we have published our most ambitious programme to date for the coming autumn. It includes the launch of a new book club; a teaching series exploring the theological, liturgical and ecclesiastical background of vestments and sacred textiles, including a guided visit to the V&A; and an introductory lecture on Canon Law.

Together with our regular events, the programme also encourages participation in some of the major events of the wider Anglo-Catholic calendar. We hope that this will deepen the formation we offer while helping young adults to become more firmly rooted in the wider catholic life of the Church of England beyond Fidelium. We are enormously grateful to all at Forward in Faith for their friendship and support and look forward to seeing this partnership develop in the years ahead. Above all, we give thanks for all that God has already done through Fidelium and look forward with confidence to all that is still to come. ND

Ordinations continue

In addition to the ordinations which took place at the end of June and beginning of July, Bishop Stephen Race was delighted to ordain Joel Gillin to the diaconate on 9 August at St Wilfrid, Cantley.



Letter from America

The experience of an ordinand on summer placement at St Timothy's Episcopal Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Between the Appalachian Mountains to its west and the Outer Banks barrier islands of the Atlantic Coast to its east, nestles the gentle city of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, USA. Home to early Moravian settlers and once a powerhouse of the tobacco industry, it is the setting of one of the Episcopal Church's most remarkable Anglo-Catholic parishes, St Timothy's, a church that will be known to some readers of *New Directions*. For this Ordinand of St Stephen's House, Oxford, it fulfilled an important condition of what was described to me recently as the ideal summer placement: it necessitated a flight to get there! No sooner had the Principal suggested the idea than I was typing, 'London Heathrow to Charlotte Douglas' into my Delta airline app, and on Friday 10 July (just missing certain 250th anniversary celebrations), I landed to begin a month-long residency.

The recent history of St Timothy's is noteworthy. Founded in 1950 as the offshoot of a downtown Episcopalian church, its growing congregation required a larger building by the dawn of the Millennium. Then, 18 years ago, Fr Steve Rice (its current and visionary Rector) inherited a new but essentially unadorned structure and set about developing a plan for its $2.5 million renovation and expansion. Work began as the COVID-19 pandemic struck, including the construction of a chapel and sacristy, an improved baptistry, nave and sanctuary, together with a significantly expanded choir loft.

Towering over the completed reordering is an extraordinary triptych by contemporary Bulgarian artist Maria Miteva, inspired by 15th century artist Rogier van der Weyden's original altarpiece. It is a deeply personal rendering for the people of Winston-Salem: St Timothy himself stands near the crucified Lord, holding in his palm a model of the smaller 1950s church. Above it, the morning light streams through three new lancet windows, across the crocketed wooden spire of the altarpiece; the *ad orientem* altar stands upon a Macael white marble mensa.

If this is beginning to suggest a church with vast reserves of money or innumerable legacies, then here we should take pause. It does not rely on large or historic endowments, but on the generosity of its people. It has two full-time priests; there is no parish secretary. It is not, we might say, the big church down the road, but its people are deeply committed, and I sensed that a number give sacrificially from their relative wealth. Parishioners have beautified the building with stencilling, woodwork and embroidery. Laura, to name but one, has used her life's work in textiles to design and make three low Mass sets, a solemn Mass set, altar frontals and so on.

All of this for what? St Timothy's motto is, 'Worship. Wisdom. Witness' and the restored church certainly communicates powerfully and fluently our instinct as Anglo-Catholics to worship Almighty God in the beauty of holiness. I came away with a renewed belief that our part of the wider Church remains an essential voice for beauty in a broken and often disfigured world, harbouring an intuitive sense of what helps draw people to their knees in prayer. St Timothy's suggests that we have not forgotten the architectural philosophy of Ninian Comper (one we may justly claim as our own), of 'unity by inclusion', of spaces designed around and determined by the liturgy.



Renovation and restoration at St Timothy's were to meet the needs of a congregation not simply growing in numbers but newly formed in an Anglo-Catholic identity: an identity that can speak of the beautiful only by the degree of its proximity to Jesus Christ and by a disposition that thirsts for wisdom.

Unique in its Diocese, St Timothy's offers the daily Mass, a public Daily Office, and a twice-weekly layled recitation of the Rosary. Sundays are busy: three morning Masses are interspersed with teaching groups, followed by Vestry or Guild meetings, and concluding with Evensong and Benediction, with an average Sunday attendance of 260. During my third week there, 98 people attended the daily Mass, and on the following Sunday morning, I walked past a packed chapel of congregants praying the Rosary. Groups meet weekly for children, youth and young adults (When the priests are asked, 'What do you have for our children and young people?', the answer is always, 'Jesus Christ'.). A lectionary Bible study group and adult formation classes gather on Wednesdays. There is a strong musical tradition. Guilds and soci-

eties assist in the sacristy and at the altar, offer hospitality, maintain the grounds and pray for the dead. There is an active Society of Our Lady of Walsingham, and it was moving to hear her title invoked at every Mass.

Witness to the faith is sustained in its foremost works of mercy through the Society of St. Joseph of Arimathea and Our Lady of Salem Shelter for Women. The first of these two non-profit organisations provides on-site burial or cremation to infants and children; the second maintains a daily homeless shelter for women through the winter months. A ministry to Law Enforcement provides officers from the Winston-Salem Police Department with 24-hour access to rooms in the church for respite and refreshment.

So, what of my own time there? When asked by members of the congregation why St Timothy's had appeal for me, I often replied with the sentiment of St. Paul, in his letter to the Colossians: 'We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints'. I did, truly, want to see this community alive with the love of Jesus Christ; I hoped to listen in on the Christian conversation in North America, spot connections with our life and work in the Church of England, and get to know some of those who uphold Catholic order and doctrine in the Episcopal Church. My experience of life in the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England has been broad and I've been blessed greatly by the ministry of faithful priests and people, so to look for signs of this elsewhere seemed like a good idea.

I think I had also hoped it might prove a good cover for working through those less-than-comfortable practical aspects of this Ordinand's life. Having spent most of my past life in an organ loft, I am an altar server most to be pitied. I sensed that I had work to do on my preaching and so learning from Fr Steve's own homiletical preparation and style seemed an excellent use of my time. He taught me to preach without notes and from the heart and the conversations that flowed from these moments were generous and fruitful.

I also wanted to meet people. I hoped to be out most evenings, sitting around people's tables and hearing their stories and learning about their lives and their faith. Let me say that I was thoroughly moved and drawn in by my experience of their sustained hospitality: the generosity, kindness, and openness of the people of this part of North Carolina (and their take on the BBQ) will stay with me forever, as may my expanded waistline. I sensed all along that I was meeting dear friends in the faith; such friends as one works hard to keep for life. My hosts for the whole month, Joey and Ashley, were long-standing members and I relished their company and their Bourbon!

Like all good churches, St Timothy's is full of people living the Gospel in their everyday lives. One very early morning, I joined Fr Steve as he blessed a parishioner's business; I spent another day with a congregant whose work is transforming the lives of the unhoused in Winston-Salem. I hugely valued the conversation and company of those who would pop into the church office hour by hour, delivering muffins for the police or home-grown tomatoes for our lunch. I witnessed a vacation Bible school in action, helped with the night shelter, attended pre-marital counselling, meetings of the Vestry, guilds and societies, and led a Bible study.

Most profoundly of all, I accompanied Fr Steve on his visits to local hospitals for the work of the Society of St Joseph of Arimathea, ahead of the monthly burial of those infants and children who have recently died through miscarriage and other forms of foetal loss. At the Sunday burial, seeing the care given to these little ones and members of the congregation spontaneously hugging grieving parents they had never met, I was left with great hope that our tradition might continue to find new, vocal and practical forms for the promotion of the dignity of life through all its stages. I encourage all readers to acquaint themselves with the work of this vitally important, but sadly unique, society.

There were surprises: I found myself in a church that loved its Catholic faith and practice, but in a determinedly Prayer Book (with additions) form. At the end of Morning and Evening Prayer each day, we prayed the Prayer of General Thanksgiving from the Book of Common Prayer. I loved it and began to think about how well, and to what extent, our various liturgical expressions at home give witness to our lives as Catholics within the Church of England.

I know that all of us on placement this summer from the House have been grateful to those faithful priests who have hosted us. For me, there were the hours of conversation with Fr Steve: in the car, the office, and at the table with his family. He gave of his time and his life without care for the clock and taught me profound truths about the life of the parish priest. His sustained and careful formation of his people was beautiful and moving to observe.

I sense that it is often easy, on this side of the pond, to consider the witness of churches in America as something 'other': they seem to have more money, more people, roofs that don't leak and towers that aren't crumbling. They don't seem to be under constant threat of pastoral reorganisation. But I was taken by the worship, wisdom and witness of St Timothy's. It is not always easy being an Anglo-Catholic in that world (nor, I know, in ours). It can feel lonely: activities and priorities can be misunderstood. But I encountered, every day, a deep and pervasive joy here – joy in the beauty of holiness, in the structure and rhythm of daily prayer, the growing life of the congregation, in acts of service and mercy – and principally in Jesus Christ, whose life they so faithfully received in the Mass and to whom they bore witness in their lives. With St Paul, I knew that I had been given the enormous privilege of greeting the saints of God. And if it is by our fruits that we are known as His people, then St Timothy's is a goodly Eden. ND

Simon Bland is about to begin his second year of formation for the priesthood at St Stephen's House, Oxford.

A longstanding friendship

Representatives from Forward in Faith and the Society attended the Societas Sanctae Birgittae in Vadstena at the end of July

Since the early 20th century, the Swedish devotional society Societas Sanctae Birgittae (SSB), who promote the most famous swede after ABBA, St Bridget (Birgitta) of Sweden, has had close and friendly ties with the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Church of England. SSB meets each year for the General Chapter and a few days of celebration and holiday around St Bridget's Feast Day (23 July) in her own town of Vadstena, where her shrine is a great draw for pilgrims from around the world.



Left to Right: Bishop Norman Banks, Hanna Hart SSB, William Hart, Fr Robert Hart SSB, Bishop Paul Thomas, Pater Dr Augustinus Sander OSB, Tom Middleton

Vadstena itself is a small place (population around 5800) and is referred to as a city, despite its low number of residents, because of its historical importance. First as a pilgrim destination since the 14th century when St Bridget founded the first monastery of her Bridgettine Order. In addition to this, Vadstena Castle (dating from the 16th century, when Sweden became Protestant) is one of Sweden's best-preserved castles from this period. Vadstena also sits on the shore of Lake Vättern, the second largest lake in Sweden, and so is a popular tourist destination too. Today the remaining buildings of the monastery are occupied by a museum (Sancta Birgitta Klostermuseum) and a hotel, (Vadstena Klosterhotel), and the castle houses the provincial archives and a museum of 16th and 17th century furniture, portraits and paintings.

St Bridget was a 14th century Christian mystic, visionary and founder of the Bridgettine Order. Born in Sweden around 1303, she was a woman of deep prayer who sought to follow Christ faithfully in every part of her life. After being widowed, she travelled to Rome, where she called the Church and its leaders to greater holiness, simplicity and reform. She also urged the Pope to return from Avignon to Rome. Bridget died in Rome in 1373 and was canonised in 1391. Today, she is remembered as the patron saint of Sweden and one of the patron saints of Europe. Her life offers a striking example of contemplative prayer joined to active service, courageous witness and a deep love for the Church.

For many years, there has been a standing invitation from SSB to several members of The Society to come to Vadstena for the annual pilgrimage. 2026 was no exception, and we especially welcomed the Bishop of Oswestry, Director Tom Middleton and Bishop Norman Banks. As always there were also many other guests and visitors from around the world, among them: Latvia (including the newly retired archbishop), Finland, Germany, Italy, USA and Britain.

The excellent festival lecture, on *St Bridget, an ecumenical bridge*, was given by Pater Dr Augustinus Sander, OSB from the papal Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity. Later, at the ecumenical festival evening service, Cardinal Anders Arborelius, OCD preached a sermon about Our Lady, before the members, visitors, nuns, bishops, pilgrims, tourists and townsfolk all processed in great splendour to St Bridget's shrine to hear the reading of her last revelations and her death.

This years' service also included the handover of the Confessor's insignia from Fr Bo Brander, who was SSB's beloved Father Confessor for 25 years and whom many readers of *New Directions* will know. He handed over to Fr Markus Hagberg, the vicar and rural dean of Södra Kålland, who was elected by the General Chapter to pick up the mantle of leading SSB into the future. Please pray for him and Mother Anna Greek, who remains as SSB's Mother Superior.

May the friendship and mutual support between our societies continue and flourish! ND

Hanna Hart is Lay Chaplain to the Bishop of Beverley and a member of the Societas Sanctae Birgittae

WANDERING BISHOP

Norman Banks

It is two years since I retired to King's Lynn and I still find myself very pleasantly surprised by the number of local events that fill the calendar. A small exhibition in King's Street entitled, 'Taste' curated by Robert Anderson, one time Director of the British Museum, justified more than one visit. One of the highlights was a letter to a fan by Dame Edna Everage, self-styled housewife superstar, on notepaper, printed with the words: 'Don't throw this letter away possum! One day it will be a priceless collector's item'. The early years of retirement seem to me to be a priceless opportunity not to be wasted. And although my diary seems increasingly full, it is also thankfully light on meetings!

Over recent years, July has meant the annual gathering in Vadstena to celebrate the Feast of Saint Bridget. Her beautifully restored shrine in the magnificent Lutheran Church draws large crowds and I have been privileged in receiving an annual invitation from the Society of Saint Bridget. It is a joyous week of worship, talks and fellowship and I feel very honoured that many of my Swedish friends and colleagues look to me as their 'bishop friend'. This year Bishop Paul Thomas visited for the first time and I know how touched he was by the spirit of recollected prayer that suffused the atmosphere of the conference. Fr Bo Brander, the Father Confessor, retired this July after 25 years in office and I was one of three chosen to speak about his ministry and contribution to the catholic wing of the Lutheran Church in Sweden and his encouragement of the Society in England. While university chaplain both in Lund and Uppsala he has formed generations of younger clergy in catholic sacramental life.

A visit to the recently completed Roman Catholic Benedictine Convent of the Sacred Heart a few miles outside Vadstena has also become a much looked forward to annual event. Sister Gertrud provides coffee and cake but is light on small talk. Together with Bishop Paul, Tom Middleton and Sister Gerd we were all grilled on our understanding of the Trinity and how we commune with the threefold mystery.

The Society Bishops invited us retirees to an overnight stay at Saint Katharine's in Limehouse for a catchup and an opportunity to share some collective wisdom. It was a very upbeat meeting and we were all heartened by the ways in which catholics in the church of England seem able to continue, creatively and with a light touch, to navigate the complexities of life within our confused and seemingly rudderless church.

Walsingham is easily accessible by public transport from King's Lynn and I've enjoyed several visits over the last few weeks, not least to spend a little time with Fr Andrew Bishop and his wife Alice as they prepare for ministry in England's Nazareth. It was very difficult to refrain from over reminiscing about my time there as vicar but as our conversation ranged from mission to gardening, I had a real sense of excitement about this next stage in the life of the parishes. Fr Andrew inherits a lively and healthy benefice that was creatively and ably led by Fr Harri and Clare Williams and I'm looking forward to seeing how things unfold in the coming months and years. Relationships with the patrons are strong and fruitful and for her wedding from Walsingham Abbey in early August, Dorothea chose Saint Mary's and All Saints. She posed for photos with her new husband Gwijde outside the west porch where her grandparents had been married many years before. Her great grandfather Mr John Gurney, very generously contributed to the restoration of the church after the fire and donated the funds for the glorious east window and neo-baroque pipe organ. Seeing the Abbey arch lit up in various colours was breathtakingly beautiful after a day of Christian celebration.

I've being prepared for my first webinar for McCabe Travel to promote a pilgrimage to Piedmont next June for their interpretation of the Passion. This will be my first webinar, which will be something of a challenge, but if it encourages a few more people to sign up for the experience, it will be worth it. It is very different to Oberammergau as it is so very Italian, passionate, emotional and predictably chaotic!

And finally, the Benefice of All Saints and Saint Peter's is now in vacancy as Fr Adrian Ling has departed for rainier climes in the North West as Vicar of Lytham Saint Anne's. I'm having to hone my pastoral skills to help things run smoothly in the benefice, taking my turn to preside and preach and also support our assistant curate, Father Ben Almond. I've volunteered to assist him in the kitchen at his homemade pizza evening where, as his training supervisor, and, while we knead the dough, I plan to keep reminding him of the positive and far-reaching fruits of the Second Vatican Council.

Lots of work still to do in preparation for leading a group to the Seven Churches of Revelation in Turkey in September. But it will be another priceless opportunity to deepen knowledge and engage with Scripture as we worship, pray and talk along the way, and as is my wont, not a moment will be wasted. ND

ND DIARY

Sister Carol Elizabeth, SSM

The summer months get off to a busy start at the Priory in Walsingham with us celebrating our Patronal festival, St Margaret's day. This was a sung Mass followed by Benediction and celebrated by our Bishop Visitor, Bishop Peter Wheatley, with Fr Paul Noble, one of our Trustees, preaching. We were joined by about 50 Associates and friends, several of whom stayed with us at the Priory for a few days.

A week later the Walsingham Youth pilgrimage started. Acting as a Chaplain on site I was based at the prayer tent but spent much of my time wandering around the campsite having discussions with pilgrims, both young and old. I joined the Ministry team for Morning prayer and then said Evening Prayer and Compline with anyone in the prayer tent at the time. As always, it was good to see so many young people joining in the worship which was led beautifully with lively music from CJM but then leading into quiet as we went to Communion. The highlights of the week being the Tuesday evening rosary walk from the Abbey Grounds to the Shrine grounds with everyone falling into silence as we all entered the grounds before being given candles and kneeling in front of the Altar of Light for Benediction. And the late-night liturgy on the Wednesday evening seeing the queues of young people waiting for Laying on of Hands, anointing and making their confession.

The next big event was a week later with the Assumption. Every Saturday afternoon I am on duty welcoming people to the Shrine, that afternoon Sprinkling at the Well went on for much longer than usual with a large crowd of visitors arriving just as we started. Later, the village filled up with people for the candlelit procession of Our Lady from St Mary's parish church to the Roman Catholic church of the Annunciation and then on to the Shrine grounds as we sang. At each station was a reading, a sermon by Fr Graeme Rowlands and a decade of the rosary. I was privileged to be asked to lead the rosary in the Shrine grounds.

Around these big events we kept our daily rhythm of prayer with the daily five-fold Offices, Mass and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament as well as our ministry at the Shrine and in the Parish. Each Tuesday and Saturday evening I assist with the Laying on of Hands at the Shrine liturgy. Pilgrims come with all sorts of needs, whether they be physical, mental or emotional and several times over the summer pilgrims have come to tell me about the healing they have received at the Shrine, some receiving relief from pain, another finding they are now able to walk better, others just having been able to leave their worries at the feet of Our Lady. Eating our main meal in the Shrine refectory gives us a chance to meet and chat with many more pilgrims in an informal way.

but then one week just one young man who had come on pilgrimage for his first time wanting to meet and talk with a Sister.

Each Wednesday afternoon we hold our Priory Pop-in with pilgrims and locals popping in for a cup of tea or coffee and some cake. Most weeks during the summer we have lots of pilgrims popping in but then one week just one young man who had come on pilgrimage for his first time wanting to meet and talk with a Sister. At 3pm I have started taking pilgrims into our chapel for a visit and to tell them a bit about our life. Lots of pilgrims tell me that they have been coming to Walsingham for years and had never been into our chapel before and are fascinated to learn about our life.

Sunday mornings see me having an early breakfast before Office of Readings and Morning prayer so that I can get to St Peter's Great Walsingham where I am Sacristan. There I set up for the Eucharist with the help of the Church Wardens. I also serve and administer the Chalice there and once a fortnight lead Sunday school. At the moment, the children are thinking about Samson and they have enjoyed learning about how strong Samson was. We thought together about the things they are good at before making a pull out picture of Samson making the pillars fall down. The children love to have their work displayed in the church and receive a star each week they attend, getting a book or other prize each time they get to 10 stars.

With all this going on we also have guests staying in our cottage and in the Priory guest area. Some join us for the Offices and Mass while others attend services at the Shrine. Others simply use it as a base to explore the local area and have a relaxing time. Those who stay in the Priory are mainly Associates of the Society of St Margaret, although we also have Priests staying and other Religious. For several months we have had construction workers in the Priory making some of the bedrooms ensuite. This has been much less of a disturbance than I thought it would be. It's been good chatting to them and several of them have asked to see our chapel. We have also had our long-awaited relic cabinets put in chapel. So Bishop Robert Ladds and I spent a day putting some of our relics into reliquaries ready for placing in the cabinets. A busy summer in the Priory! ND

THE WAY WE LIVE NOW

Christopher Smith

I was at school with a boy whose father had worked for NASA and was due to take part in one of the moon landings, but he caught a cold a couple of weeks before Apollo 12 was due to take off and couldn't go. At least, I think that was the story; there were so many stories it's difficult to remember the exact detail. It didn't matter, though, because nobody believed him. We all nodded along whilst not being taken in by it. The family had lived in the United States when he was born, which was the fragment of plausibility in the NASA story, but we never regarded him as, so to speak, a reliable narrator.

I thought of him when details began to emerge of the remarkable tale spun by Jason Arday, who in 2023 had been appointed to a professorial chair in the University of Cambridge. He had not inherited one of the ancient titles, like the Regius Professor of Divinity (1540), but that of Professor of Sociology of Education, founded in 2002. The principal task of the Faculty of Education is to train people to be teachers, but, like everything in the university world nowadays, it has expanded its horizons, and you can now explore the fields of, to give but two examples, 'Education and International Development', or 'History, Philosophy and Sociology of Education'.

Readers with long memories may recall that I wrote a rather disrespectful column about sociology and sociologists in 2015, but into that world stepped Jason Arday, to the profound excitement of those in charge of his department. The trouble was that Arday turned out to be (and here I quote from an article by a London academic called Paul Sagar) 'a fraudster, plagiarist, and serial fantasist', with a 'paper-thin' academic record. I suspect many of our readers will have picked up on the story, which began to gain media traction towards the end of July with allegations (evidenced in parallel columns) that he had plagiarised other people's work in his doctoral thesis and other quasi-academic papers. Indeed, the very title of his thesis was strikingly similar to someone else's, with a grocer's apostrophe hanging over from the original, creating a grammatical error where none had existed previously.

But the media too had been in thrall until the story began to unravel this summer.

Severe autism was pleaded in aid, and part of Arday's charm was his personal story, according to which he began life locked into a very severe form of autism which meant he couldn't speak until he was 11, nor indeed read or write until he was 18. He was one unlucky lad, because, by his own account (given at different times and with differing detail) he was beaten up and developed epilepsy and, whilst in the middle of running 30 marathons in 35 days, sustained a break in his leg which he managed to run through, even though his leg had swollen to twice its normal size.

There was plenty more where that came from, but he got a place at a teacher-training college and became a PE teacher, and a remarkable career in universities followed. Sadly, though, when it all came tumbling down in mid-August, he took his own life, and in doing so, in a peculiar sort of way, he regained control of the narrative. Now it was the media who were under the spotlight: had their behaviour been so unreasonable as to drive him to suicide?

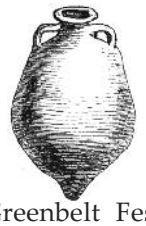
It is heartbreaking that someone who feels so cornered that his only way out is to kill himself, suicide is a terrible thing, as any parish priest will tell you. I will never forget the first funeral of a suicide that I conducted; it was when I was a curate, and the deceased was not much older than me. His heartbroken parents were desperate to take the blame off him and lay it on themselves, but I don't remember for one moment believing that what had unfolded was their fault.

Jason Arday must bear responsibility for his own alleged tall stories. He had agency (as they say nowadays) and so did the universities which employed him and the media were not wrong to do the job that perhaps others ought to have done. The universities suspended their critical faculties and they ought to come clean about why. But the media too had been in thrall until the story began to unravel this summer. I can find only one slightly sceptical question put to Arday before July, in an interview he gave to Channel 4's Krishnan Guru-Murthy. Arday says, 'I went to university at 20 but had the reading age of a nine-year-old'. A split-second look of incredulity flashes across the interviewer's face, and he asks, 'Really? I mean, is that possible?' And the answer—'Yeah, it is!'—goes unchallenged. It seems that no-one ever challenged him, as in a Q&A session after a rambling lecture lurking on the internet from last year in which he made reference to, 'an Islamic proverb which says that your right hand shouldn't show what your left hand's doing'. Inevitably, nobody pointed out that he had in fact half-remembered a saying of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount.

This is a sad mess of the modern world, and, to quote Dr Sagar again, 'the knives are being sharpened, and it won't only be the bulls**t merchants who'll suffer when the backlash comes'. ND

TREASURE IN CLAY JARS

Festus



Commiserations to the England football team, who got as far as the semi-finals in this year's tournament. Here is a reminder of lines in the Church of England's 'Prayer for the World Cup', released in June: 'May we see and celebrate the hand of God in the creativity of every curving free kick, silky pass or impossible save. May we have compassion and perspective on the miskicks, missed penalties, and muddled VARs. Every winning team needs a losing team – even if you were the better team. Let the journey to World Cup glory be not only for the nation that wins. May we see something more of the world you want us to be: a gathering of every nation and people who share your glory'.

An alarming front-page headline in *The Sunday Times* this summer caused concern: Reform's bank account was frozen during election after Cottrell donations. But worry no more, for this was not the Archbishop of York but George Cottrell (no relation), 'the criminal who bankrolled Nigel Farage'. Politics and religion rarely mix well, and Bishopthorpe is nothing like the Borgias (at least, we trust not).

To the Diocese of Exeter, for a baptism at St Peter's, Cullompton. The officiant was the Bishop of Crediton, the Right Revd Moira Astin, who began by asking the candidate – as the plunge pool was prepared – 'Is this the first time you've been baptized?' (The clip is available online.) She then proceeded to administer the rite with the words 'We baptize you… ' Readers may recall the case of the Roman Catholic priest in America who not long ago was found against for using the irregular 'We' form and all the candidates had to be brought back for proper baptism, so perhaps 'Is this your first time?' might be a suitable question after all.

The Greenbelt Festival is a somewhat hippy affair ('somewhere to come together once a year, where we're as likely to dream up a better world as we are to dance and debate, to pray and to party'). Wanting to be inclusive, it has attempted a model where, 'radical generosity' allows many concession tickets and free places. The economics of this are not entirely clear, nor is why the whole thing, 'will need to take a breather in 2027 – at least as the full-scale festival event you know and love'. The organisers want, 'a place where Greenbelt can become more fully itself…More open to our existing community, and, importantly, the people who haven't discovered us quite yet. Somewhere Greenbelt can be more Greenbelt'.

Michaelmas is another appropriate point for ordinations. But liturgists everywhere should heed Wells Cathedral this year and its service booklet for the Ordination of Deacons. Instead of 1 Timothy 3.8-10 ('In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons…') they had 2.8-10: 'Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God'.

Quentin Letts took the pages of *The Spectator* recently to bewail new attempts by the to keep the show on the road: 'A new scheme, oversight ministry, adopted by some Church of England dioceses, is taking vicars off the streets. Instead of being front-line clergy they will become "oversight ministers" and "area deans", managers of lay, unpaid "focal ministers". These focal ministers will take services, undertake pastoral visits and, as the promotional blurb puts it, "be present in the wider community as an available point of contact for anyone connecting with the church community". David Blunkett gave us plastic plod community support officers; the C of E is giving us plastic parsons'. It has been said for some time that devaluing and diluting priesthood will not do much ultimately to serve the common good (although Rome is not exactly overflowing with vocations either, for different reasons). The burden of bureaucracy, and a breakdown in priestly authenticity. Sad but true, and a tragedy for the holy people of God.

The Feast of St Francis approaches, and with it the increasingly popular, 'pet-blessing service'. Last year, one such event was advertised in the Diocese of Chelmsford with the Right Revd Lynne Cullens, who is…the Bishop of Barking!

The BBC announced Dolly Parton's death at the top of the 10pm news bulletin on 25 August but, virulently anti-Christian, did not once mention her strong faith or religious work. She died on the same day as former director of the Royal School of Church Music and onetime organist at All Saints', Margaret Street, Harry Bramma. What a conversation that must have been when the two of them arrived at the pearly gates. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

ND

BOOKS

DIVINE PRESENCE
Depictions of Marble in Late Gothic and Early Renaissance Painting

Edited by Karl Kolbitz

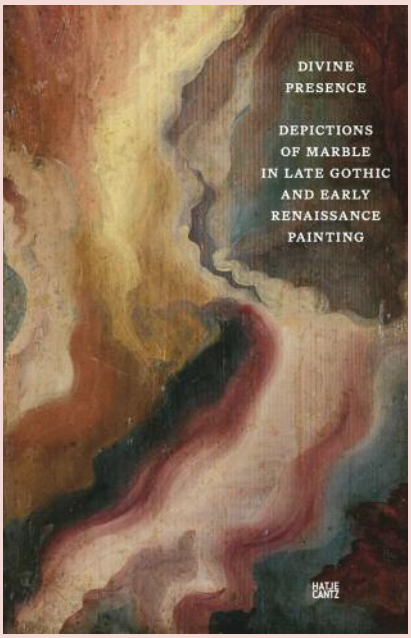
Harje Cantz, 2026
ISBN 9783775762090

In 1972, John Berger published his seminal essay, *Ways of Seeing*. It brought to the appreciation of art an understanding of how our experience is inherently affected by the social, political and economic conditions of the time and place in which we view it. Issued earlier this year, Karl Kolbitz's *Divine Presence: Depictions of Marble in Late Gothic and Early Renaissance Painting* asks us, relatedly, to consider how a universally accepted pre-scientific mentality shaped the illusion of multicoloured marble found in some of the masterworks of certain medieval Italian painters, effecting 'a daring visual strategy for bridging the earthly and the divine' (p.13). What Berger did for art appreciation in the 1970s, Kolbitz does for making new sense of Renaissance art history in the 2020s. The former presents us with an original sociology and political economy of art; the latter offers us a novel theological aesthetics of one age-old branch of it.

The result is a sumptuously illustrated book which invites us to enter a structure of feeling normally obscured by the atheistic secularism of modern times. In doing so, it seeks to enable appreciators to experience the supernatural significance of pretend marble, gifting them a distinctive Christian sense of the celestial and ineffable as a result. The publisher's blurb is right: 'Through stunning imagery, original research, and engaging texts, this book uncovers the spiritual and devotional power of painted marble in the art of the Late Gothic and Early Renaissance.'

It is not then a book that is likely to impress those who disdain religious sentiment in general, and orthodox Christian versions of it in particular, excepting unbelievers who have a specialist interest in, and admiration of, Renaissance painting. On the other hand, Christians whose devotional life is enthusiastically informed by artistic representations of different aspects of the Faith, will find much in *Divine Prescence* to sustain their spirits. So, if, like me, images of the Madonna and Child impress you, there is much to attract your eye in this book because between its covers there are eleven of them. The Annunciation is well represented too by a further dozen photographs.

In each case the fictive marble on show introduces us to 'the radiance of Heaven, the miraculous activity of God, and the immediacy of the divine presence . . . heightening the significance of the scenes framed, giving them an ethereal, other-worldly atmosphere' (p.12). Anticipating twentieth century artistic headways, such as the American abstract expressionist movement, it's not hard, referencing another reviewer's words, to see in these images 'a Jackson Pollock canvas lying in wait'.



The plates on pages 13 and 128-9, which each disclose details of the backdrop to Andrea del Castagno's *Last Supper* (1447), are extraordinary in this connection. Looking attentively at their representation in paint of marble, I was reminded less of a Pollock drip painting and more of the snapshot views I've seen of the galaxy clusters that make up the Hubble Ultra Deep Field. Akin to what these show, Kolbitz's photographs encourage a sense of what eternity might look like if one could see it. The photographs on pages 82, 84 and 85 of the marble painted by Giotto in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua add to this mix, illustrating further the spiritual energy in play in every case.

Grander still is Fra Angelico's *The Coronation of the Virgin* (c.1430), to which Kolbitz introduces us on page 49, which shows a flight of nine coloured marble steps leading to Mary's throne, each luxuriously decorated in a fashion that is both hallucinatory and metaphysically abstract, an effect sensationally illustrated by a double-page magnified photograph on pages 50-51. Kolbitz also draws attention to the 'surprising manifestation of painted marble' (p.138) found on the verso (reverse) of paintings. Although these differ dramatically in style from the figurative images on the front, an aesthetic articulation is regularly achieved. In Gentile da Fabriano's *Madonna and Child* (c.1420-23) the image of Mary sitting with the baby Jesus on the front is complemented on the reverse by a painted marble inlay recalling portable altars (p.139). This two-in-one assemblage serves a devotional purpose, facilitating the celebration of Mass outside of the church building.

But why did marble feature so strongly in the creative imagination of these artists, causing them to represent it so much in their devotional paintings? Kolbitz tells us: 'During antiquity, it was thought that marble was created at the dawn of time and continued to

grow and replenish itself (p.196) … Marble allowed painters to suggest the intangible … It acted as a link between the visible and the invisible, guiding viewers towards the contemplation of higher things. Painted marble [thus] became a means to express what could not otherwise be shown: the mystery of the creation, the transformation of matter, and the elusive presence of God' (p.12).

The 'living' attributes of marble is given graphic pictorial representation in Andrea Mantegna's very famous *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* (c.1483). As Kolbitz says, 'Christ's gray, pallid body provides a stark contrast to [the flesh-like pale pink marble slab on which he is stretched out], creating the impression that he has permeated it with a residue of his life force' (p.40). This extraordinary spectacle is deeply compelling, as is much else in this wondrous publication. I can't recommend it enough, despite it not being cheap to buy.

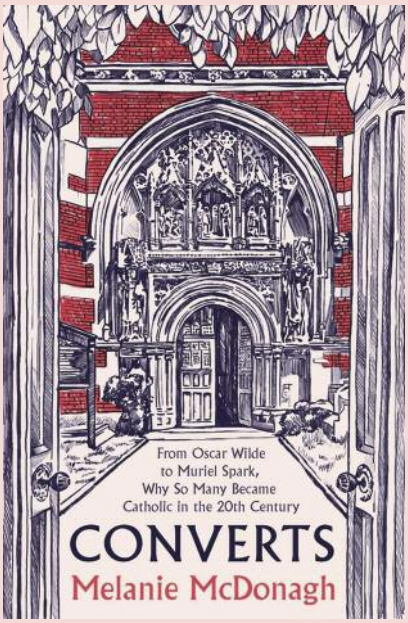
David Halpin

CONVERTS
From Oscar Wilde to Muriel Spark, Why so many became Catholics in the 20th century
Melanie McDonagh
Yale University Press, 2026
ISBN 978 0 300 30619 4

G. K. Chesterton, one of the larger converts in this enjoyable, well-written book, said that it was the 'unyielding character' of the Catholic Faith which he found appealing. 'I believe it is the truth,' he said of the church into which he was received.

Chesterton was one of the more convivial and jovial converts to Rome. Evelyn Waugh was a rather different kind of convert, no less convinced, nor less devout, but he took his irascibility with him and was sorely tried by the liturgical reforms in the wake of the Second Vatican Council in the swinging, iconoclastic, 1960s.

Each of the converts profiled could have said the same or experienced a similar sentiment as



Chesterton. All could also have echoed the words of Siegfried Sassoon who said of his reception, 'What I am doing [is] for the glory of God and my soul's salvation'.

The pre-eminent Anglican convert of the 19th century was John Henry Newman, now raised to the altars of the Church. As Melanie McDonagh rightly acknowledges much has been written by and about Newman. In her accomplished summary she ensures that he does not dominate and unbalance the book but she makes the telling point that 'Newman's obvious Englishness was to make Catholicism seem less alien.' Anglo-Catholicism navigated Newman's conversion: both Pusey and Keble remained and later leaders of ability, such as Charles Gore, emerged.

The book opens with the conversion of Oscar Wilde. His was a death-bed reception as he drifted in and out of consciousness. It was an unwittingly fitting reception for one whose wit was rooted in irony. He was received and died as Robbie Ross and Lord Alfred Douglas, the son of Wilde's nemesis the Marquess of Queensberry, looked on. The priest who gave conditional absolution and administered the Last Rites as Wilde died beyond his means was another of Queensberry's sons Lord Archibald Douglas. Both Lord Alfred and Ross converted to Catholicism in the years following.

After his release from Reading Gaol, Wilde reunited with Douglas who subsidised Wilde's tenuous existence and he paid for his funeral. Despite marrying two year's after Wilde's death, for the remainder of his life he never shook off Wilde's shadow. Douglas was received into the Catholic Church. One trigger for his conversion had been Pope Pius X's Encyclical against Modernism.

Although the author argues that 'Douglas' faith was … like a child's, and his prayers and devotion were simple and unaffected,' he is defined more by his feuds, anti-semitism, libellous journalism, and a spell in Wormwood Scrubs for a libel on Winston Churchill. Prison changed him for the better, the author avows, yet there were further brushes with litigation before his death in 1945 in Hove … actually.

John Grey, considered the possible model and inspiration for Wilde's character Dorian Gray, was a young poet, aesthete, and dandy. His background was far from that literary invention. He was the eldest of nine children to a Scottish carpenter who migrated south. He left school aged thirteen to become a metal turner at Woolwich Arsenal. He embarked on an exercise of self-improvement and re-invention but remained something of a tantalising enigma, described by one of his friends, echoed by several of his benefactors, as 'inscrutable, enigmatic, shrouded in mystery'. His chapter is a highlight of the book.

Biographical chapters are interspersed by sections providing background information and context. Modernism, as an example, was an influence on several converts. The church's reaction was to stifle intellectual debate, to curb liberal biblical scholarship and to impose an 'anti-Thomist … scholasticism'. Sounds fine to me.

One of the compelling profiles is of Gwen John (sister of the stereotypical raffish, promiscuous artist Augustus John). She was 'an artist with an unshakeable conviction of the value of her work, and her interiors, and her portraits with their subtle colour tones and harmonies'. Now more valued than the work of her better known priapic brother, her faith was both in-

tellectually coherent and simple. Unlike many others, however, her conversion did not bring contentment. Nor did her passions and sapphic obsessions wane but 'conversion did change her to be a child of prayer and God's artist.'

Conversion needed a supply of sympathetic priests. Some became as much known in society as those whom they instructed and received into the Church. Fathers Ronald Knox, Vincent McNabb, Martin D'Arcy, Philip Caraman, pre-eminent among them. Their biographies and writings are worth reading.

Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene were both converts and contemporary novelists distinctive in their styles and in their newfound religion. Greene took a more liberal, even lax interpretation of the moral tenet. Waugh loathed the liturgical reforms in the wake of the Second Vatican Council but did not resile from the Faith once delivered to the Apostles. Perhaps the most appealing of the post-war conversions was that of the novelist Muriel Spark , (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*) whose conversion was 'by way of Newman; not all those beheaded martyrs'.

My inner pedant compels me to observe that on page 288 the author refers to Easter Saturday when she means Holy Saturday.

William Davage

THE MOUNTAIN OF BLESSING
Exploring the beatitudes

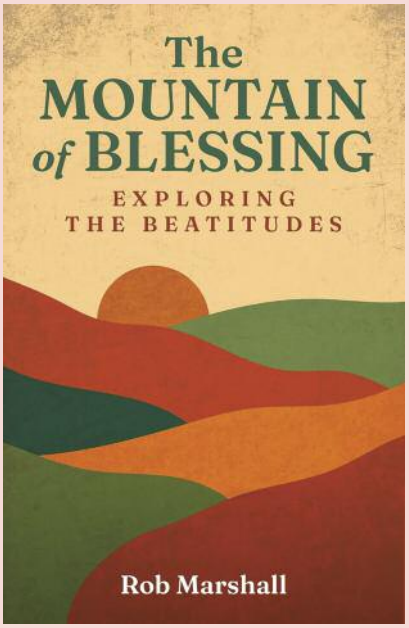
Rob Marshall

Canterbury Press, 2026
ISBN 9781786226372

I must begin with a confession; any mention of the Beatitudes and I have spiritual and emotional vertigo. To me their simplicity disguises the Word at its sharpest and most penetrating; I have a holy dread of them. It was with some trepidation, and not a little suspicion, that I began reading this deceptively thin book. My immediate response was to be puzzled; how can Rob Marshall approach the Beatitudes in such a relaxed way? They invariably plunge me into a form of spiritual angst! But gradually I found that his gentle, engaging, conversational style enabled me to feel differently about them. The author is an experienced parish priest, but also a broadcaster, often heard delivering Thought for the Day on the BBC's *Today* programme. In this invitation to explore the Beatitudes both his experience as a parish priest and his insights from the media world are both at work to produce reflections that are wide ranging and speak to the Christian dealing with daily life in the world as it is.

Rob Marshall is not afraid of digital media (although he is aware of its dangers) and each beatitude has links via a QR code that connect to music and images to provide a multi-dimensional approach. I did use these and found them very helpful; not least because they introduced me to Cesar Franck's *Les Beatitudes*. There is a pattern to the reflection on each Beatitude. First, an introduction to the scriptural context and sometimes some quite detailed explanation of the language used. Secondly, one or two Scripture references to place the Beatitude within the teaching of the wider New Testament. This is followed by suggestions for prayer, music to listen to and an image to consider. The end of each chapter poses questions to ponder. He has in mind that this book could be used by groups as well as individuals.

Marshall almost immediately helps the reader to understand that the Beatitudes are an expression of the values and relationships that are integral to the Kingdom of God. He writes that the Beatitudes 'are the hallmarks of the kingdom life- a life rooted in God's grace, open to all who are willing to step into its light.' One of the most enriching aspects of his approach is the way he connects the Beatitudes to aspects of contemporary society where he sees the kingdom values of the Beatitudes breaking through. For example, in reflecting on 'blessed are those who mourn' he has a passage discussing the hospice movement and its place in society; when treating the Beatitude 'blessed are those who are merciful' he discusses contemporary issues of inclusion in society. There was only one chapter on 'blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness' that I found unsatisfactory. Marshall went down the route of personal righteousness, which is a reasonable response, but I don't think this is all Jesus was speaking about. There is the whole prophetic tradition of righteousness and social justice which was sidestepped. But it is only a very short volume!



This book is effective in what it sets out to do, to help Christians explore the meaning of the Beatitudes in their life. I can imagine situations where I would put it into someone's hands. In such a concise treatment Marshall presents a huge variety of material and insight, drawing on both St Augustine's writing on the Beatitudes and the teaching of Pope Francis. Marshall also draws heavily on his intimate knowledge and experience of the Holy Land. In his conclusion he writes 'Living [the Beatitudes] will not shield us from hardship. In fact, they prepare us to face it. Humility may be understood. Mercy may be exploited. Peace-making may be resisted. Purity of heart may be mocked. Hunger for righteousness may provoke opposition. And yet, though it all, we are told, 'You are blessed.' It is the deep security of knowing that whatever storms break over us, our lives are anchored in Christ.' Amen to that.

Andrew Hawes

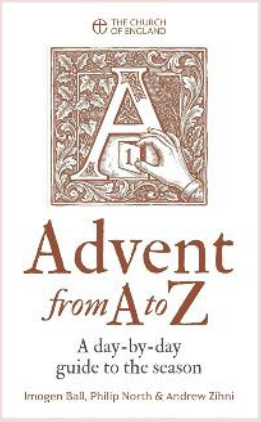
ADVENT FROM A-Z

A day-by-day guide to the season

Imogen Ball, Philip North & Andrew Zihni

Church House Publishing, 2026
ISBN: 9781781405659

The Advent season of preparation will soon be here and for the most prepared of *New Directions* readers, here is a wonderful book to use during that season. Suitable for individual daily reflection or usable with groups with adaptable content suitable for prayer and discussion, this book is a wonderful treasure to inspire both young and old.



It features 24 daily reflections. 'How?' I hear you ask, as there are 26 letters of the alphabet. There is one slight 'cheat' where XYZ is for 'Zechariah', but I think the authors can be forgiven for this. Other than this touch of artistic license, each day focuses on a single letter of the alphabet with some lovely creativity, ranging from 'F is for forerunner' through to 'U is for upside-down'.

Each entry provides a Bible reading, a short reflection, an interactive opportunity to respond, a prayer and some simple, but beautiful illustrations, evocative of an 'illuminated manuscript' style for each letter

The book unpacks biblical characters, places, Advent traditions, and theological terms. Partly due to the alphabet theme, but also because it is written in a simple, accessible and yet profound way, this book is highly suitable to be used with all ages in congregational settings and will partner well with the *Everyday Faith* app to provide content for individuals and family groups to use at home alongside any group or course-based offer. It comes highly recommended and will help to counter the present reality in our society highlighted in the introduction that it is 'always Christmas, but never Advent'.

Clare Williams



Bishop Lindsay Urwin is pictured with the Rector of the Norwegian Church, Fr Geir Øy, and the Norwegian Ambassador, Tore Hattrem, at the Norwegian Church in the parish of St Mary, Rotherhithe, offering his condolences on the death of His Majesty King Harald V.

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SAVE THE DATE

NATIONAL FESTIVAL

SATURDAY 8th MAY 2027

ST ALBAN, HOLBORN

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Could any clergy affiliated to The Society wishing to renew their **Society ID cards** please send a digital photo to Libby via admin.assistant@forwardinfaith.com

ART

Renoir and Love

National Gallery until 31 January 2027

This show was first shown at the Musée D'Orsay and had not reached London before the copy deadline for *New Directions*. What follows is based on that Paris show, allowing for its greater size and that some key works were shown only in Paris – notably the Phillips Collection 'Luncheon of the Boating Party' (1880-1) which is one of Renoir's greatest works and needs to be seen in real life. The French also showed separately a large selection of Renoir's drawings, not often seen, but an example of his great technical skill.

A recent biographer of the Buddha claimed that he had physically followed in the steps of the Buddha. A key moment in the life of the young princeling was when he passed a field of labourers and began meditating on their hard and difficult and empty life. The much later biographer also passed labourers working in a field. And he asked them how they found their hard and difficult life. They replied that they rather enjoyed it.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) was on the side of the labourers. He was the only one of the great Impressionists – Manet, Monet, Caillebotte, Degas – to have had a working-class background. Of course, he was as much a painter of modern life as the others, but poverty, alcoholism, prostitution, men's ill-treatment of women, the sheer physical toil of manual labour, don't seem to have interested him. He was fully aware of those realities. Uniquely amongst his fellow Impressionists he personally gave support to the needy of Montmartre. But his special take on modern life was not its oversensitised isolation. Rather, Renoir recorded the newer, less formal standards of the interaction of men and women. His contemporaries disagreed whether he painted prostitutes on the sly or, more likely, he painted what he saw while choosing to see the best in everyone. Renoir chose to paint happy people having a good time. He realised this would not go down well with middle class critics.

It hasn't. This was the first major French retrospective since 1985. And the critics have a point. Renoir painted at least 4,000 paintings and inevitably their quality varies. There are a good number, especially c. 1865-85, the period of this show, which are very bright and strongly ('saturated') coloured. They can be sentimental.

In answer to the critics, and presumably on the basis that to understand is to forgive, the show's curators argue that Renoir's apparent sentimentality was given shape by his love of the *fêtes galantes* tradition of Watteau, Fragonard and Boucher. Renoir had merely, wonderfully, updated the courtiers in deer parks into the workers in dance halls and boating parties. Historically that is surely correct and the best works on show are of just that sort – the Orsay's 'Dance at the Moulin de la Galette' (1876) and Chicago's 'Lunch at the Restaurant Fournaise' (The Rowers' Lunch)' (1875). And it is good



to have in the same room two dance pictures – 'in the country', 'at Bougival' – which undercut the charge of sentimentality by their celebration of physical love according to social class – as ever the working class seem to be having the most fun (sadly, the London show doesn't have the third of the trilogy).

It is this physicality where Renoir can be problematic. And it's not the class, it's the flesh. There aren't many slender women in Renoir (I couldn't find any). Like Sir Peter Paul Rubens and Lucian Freud – both upper bourgeois artists – Renoir painted female flesh. Lots of it. And at least since Rubens' day there has been a reaction against so much flesh. It's just as much part of modern life (and even more of contemporary western life) as the most crushed industrial or rural worker and a lot more common than absinthe drinkers, but it doesn't attract in the same way as, say, Manet's 'Olympia.'

The show indicates how Renoir moved beyond the very fleshly with 'The Great Bathers', (1884–7) (Philadelphia Museum of Art). The



flesh here seems to be more compact, a premonition of Picasso's neo-classical nudes and the atmosphere is cooler.

This change had already been anticipated in what stands out as one of Renoir's greatest works, the National Gallery's own 'Umbrellas' (1881-5). There's no question here of his swift and slick technique and bright colours. Rather the intriguing circles of the umbrellas, the charming faces (though it's at least possible the young man is offering the seamstress more than pin money), the – relatively – subdued colour and the immaculate tone and brushwork are Renoir at his thought-out best.

It might seem a shame to go to a show to see a picture which you can normally see for free, but it is worthwhile, for in context it reminds us how Renoir's style changed and how unusual he could be. A painter of modern life – yes – but one who celebrated the experience of modern life. He took pleasure in umbrellas and rowing and long lunches and human interaction. And he encourages us to do the same.

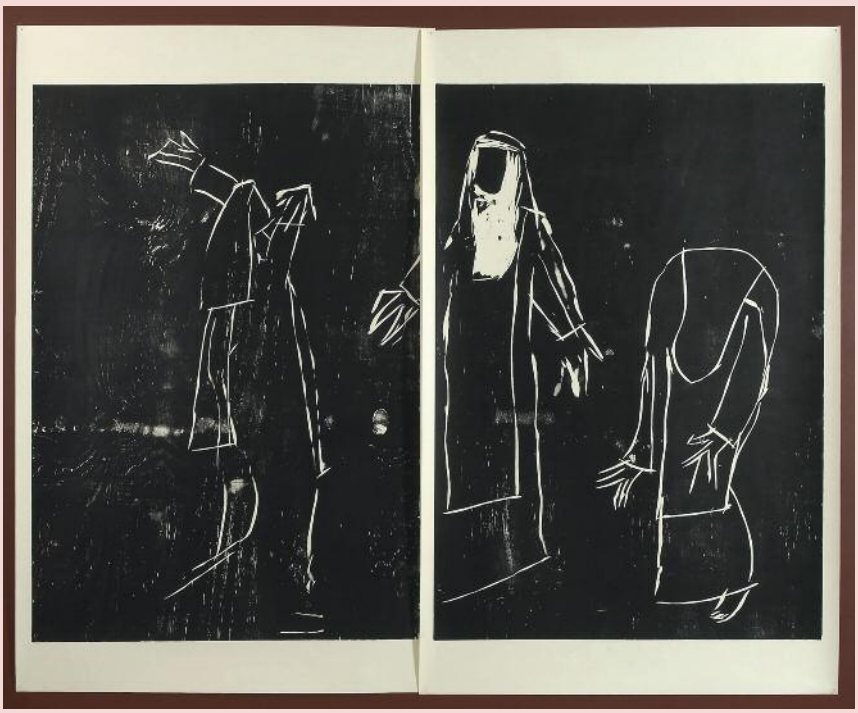
Owen Higgs

Living by the Rule: Contemporary Meets Medieval

The Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia, Norwich until 4 October 2026.

Such scholars as Martin Thornton and Robert Hale OSB Cam have argued that the Benedictine foundations of the Church in England are at the root of the enduring catholicity of the Church of England. A monastic imprint still shapes the life of our ancient universities and schools. Charles Insley of the University of Manchester argues that the Coronation Service itself needs to be read in context as emerging from the Benedictine Reform of the 10th century. The Benedictine inheritance is in the DNA of Church and State in England, yet it still comes as something of a shock to encounter in a modern, emphatically secular university museum an exhibition that has the temerity to insist that our 21st century society has much to learn from the sixth-century Rule of St Benedict.

The exhibition's audacious curators – Dr Jessica Barker, Senior Lecturer in Medieval Art History at the Courtauld Institute, and Dr Ed Krčma, Associate Professor of Art History at UEA – have brought together a remarkable assemblage of medieval artefacts associated





mostly with English Benedictine cathedral priories (primarily Canterbury, Ely, and Norwich) and brought them into conversation with modern works of art that also address the theme of what makes life meaningful. Indeed, the curators point out that in a modern context, the art world may be seen as a contemporary equivalent of the monastic – addressing the pain and injustice of the world, 'from relatively sequestered positions: the gallery, the studio, the seminar room, the museum, the art magazine or catalogue'.

Benedict is unequivocal both that human fulfilment is in the life of God and that our earthly brothers and sisters are an unavoidable means of our growth into that divine life. Barker and Krčma remind us that every aspect of our lives, in work and play and family, is full of rules, but that Benedict offers us something altogether more subtle, a rule or measure by which to assess our progress in holiness. Although his Rule is full of instructions, he insists they must be interpreted not rigidly but with flexibility, according to the circumstances of each community. Although he enjoins monks to obedience at every turn, the one on whom the burden of obedience falls most heavily is actually the abbot, who is in the place of Christ in the community. As Jesus made himself accountable for the sin of Adam, so the abbot is answerable to God for the failings of his community.

This combination of punctiliousness and flexibility is nowhere better illustrated than in the measurement of time. Being able to calculate the date of Easter and the rest of the calendar was fundamental to the religious life, and the monks had to be closely attuned to the changes of seasons. Whatever the season, day and night had twelve hours each, but the length of those hours had to vary accordingly. Accurate time-keeping relied on a sundial (a exquisite, tiny example from Canterbury) and a *computus* like that from Thorney Abbey, a book of equally exquisite mathematical calculations recording the variations in shadows according to the season. In a modern counterpart, Susan Morris used a biometric device to measure her patterns of sleeping and waking and then translated them into patterns in a woven tapestry. These items remind those of us who rely on electric light and digital time-keeping that we have disembodied ourselves, ignoring our body clocks attuned to diurnal, seasonal, and annual patterns of light and darkness.

The section engaging with the Refectory and habits of consumption is frank in acknowledging that while monastic communities were generous in giving to those in need, their hospitality was often stratified according to the rank or means of their guests. In the same way, a film by Andrea Büttner interrogates the way in which the hand-made goods crafted by a self-sustaining monastic community committed to poverty are sold at a premium to bourgeois consumers, even as the artist herself relies on her wealthy customers.

Monastics much like other human beings fail to live up to the rule or measure of their own standards and ideals. Even the precious illuminated manuscripts that adorned monks' stalls acknowledged their unruly desires, as did their misericords on which they leaned. Benedict's Rule remains compelling as an ever-fresh critique of human moral failings even as he is full of generosity to our weakness. Modern self-help books measure our achievements according to our selfish ambitions and desires, but Benedict measures us according to our orientation to the eternal and our love of others. The spirit of Benedict may still leaven our nation's laws and institutions, but if that spirit does not animate the desires of its citizens, those ideals will remain unlived and unattained.

Peter Doll

Church Crawling

***Simon Cotton* explores Holy Trinity, Ashford-in-the-Water, Derbyshire**







Like Bakewell, its bigger neighbour, Ashford has a beautiful setting. The Sheepwash bridge near the church spans the River Wye and has been described as the best possible place for Poohsticks. The gritstone church of Holy Trinity (**1**) goes back to Norman times, from which a tympanum over the doorway survives, through much is 13th -14th century. It was given a through Victorian rebuilding from 1868, reopening for services on Trinity Sunday 1870. Two years later it became a separate parish in its own right, having previously been a chapel-of-ease to Bakewell.

The pleasant interior (**2**) contains one singular treasure. The Peak District, home of Well Dressing, has several examples. At Ashford-in-the Water four hang in the north aisle, conserved and protected by Perspex frames (**3**). One is believed to date from 1747 for Ann Howard who died that year aged 21. The newest of the four is for a 21-year-old Miss Blackwell, who drowned in the River Wye in 1801. Another, which hangs at the back of the church, was made for Miss Joy Suzanne Price, Franciscan Tertiary and Sunday School teacher, who died on 7 October 1995 at the age of 72. The garland was carried over the coffin of Miss Price during the funeral service and was then hung over the pew in the church where she regularly sat. Well done, good and faithful servant (Matthew 25.21). ND

Map reference: SK195697

Mission in Zimbabwe today

***Fr Nicolas Stebbing* writes about life-giving mission to young people.**

Driving round Zimbabwe is a constant joy. It is such a beautiful country with hills, trees, colourful grasses and, usually, a blue sky! All over the country you see the little houses where the rural folk live. Sometimes they are round with thatched roofs, sometimes square and white. They are part of the beauty of this landscape. Yet life as a peasant farmer is hard. You have to work hard, often in the heat, sometimes in the rain, to grow enough food to live on. If you are lucky with the rain you grow enough to sell some; then you can pay the children's school fees. Sometimes you don't and the children get pushed out of school. Without schooling they have no hope of a decent life. If they are lucky they may find a local labouring job, or join their family on the small farm, hoping enough rain will come each year to grow a crop. Many accept this way of life and get on with it, as peasants always have. But some are highly intelligent. Some have ambition and want more. Like young people everywhere, they have their dreams. They will go to town to find jobs, and there are no jobs. Then in desperation for money they may turn to crime, or prostitution, or simply live unhappily in a slum. Their dreams die.

Tariro is full of young people we have rescued from that fate. My memories are of delightful youngsters I have met as I travelled around the country. For example, three of our university students. Nyasha is studying electrical engineering; Memory is doing industrial chemistry; Rejoice is in her last year of business studies. After we played tennis with them they sat with some of my friends and ate mounds of meat from a barbecue. It was all so normal, yet for them it is extraordinary. They could never dress like this, or look forward to a good future if we had not taken them under our wing.

Then there is a group of boys in Shurugwi. I have known most of them since primary school and watched them grow up. They are good, solid, hard-working rural boys. They often work in the sisters' fields helping them grow crops (and helping to eat them!). None of them have living fathers. Most of them have no mothers alive. Yet Willard on the left has just got 12 brilliant qualifications. Tashinga is turning into a brilliant athlete. Ebenezer has begun a degree in politics at University in Harare. Munyaradzi is in his final year of a social work degree. Joram has just started a carpentry course which he is loving. And Panashe is moving into tool making. They are also good enthusiastic Christians, partly because they love singing, something the Shona churches do very well.

And here is a group of youngsters from our house in Harare which we started 16 years ago. Three are from children's homes. Two are from rural Shurugwi. Most of them can tell stories of hardship and abuse that make us weep, yet when you meet them, they are



really nice, sensible young people. Life in this family has helped to heal their wounds, ease the pain, given them hope and self-confidence and knowledge that their dreams can come true. Their lives are normal and for them, to be normal is a miracle.

This is mission in Zimbabwe today. All these youngsters go to church because they are part of a happy family that sets the example. They love each other and they love the people who care for them. It works the other way, too. One mother in the sex trade said, 'I thought God hated me but now I see what He has done for my daughter so I know He must love me'.

It has an impact, too, in England. Our newspapers and screens are full of disasters. It is easy to lose hope that God is acting in this world. Then people read stories of our youngsters and see hope, and new life and wonderful achievements in the face of hardship. Their belief in a Christ who brings hope out of darkness is renewed.

It's a wonderful story of a small charity started 16 years ago. It has grown into these lovely, heart- warming young people. Unfortunately, it costs a lot. We see our bank balance dropping each month and not recovering enough. We are always looking for help and support with individual donations, a standing order, or a contact to one of the funds that can make really large grants. It will enable more young Zimbabweans to fulfil their dreams. It will also show them and people in England that God cares for us all.

Contact ***nstebbing@mirfield.org.uk*** or see our website ***www.tarirouk.com***. ND

Fr Nicolas Stebbing is a monk of the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield.

◆POEM◆

Jacob's ladder

by Elisabeth Angwin, Midsummer's Day 2026

Drowsy in the heat, I saw
A ladder spill from a high window
Onto the altar. A shaft of sun was
Spiralling the incense, up, down.
(*Let my prayer be as incense*).

The ladder lacked happy angels
Now to descend, now to scale,
To pause on the hazy double-helix,
To ascend the puffs of smoke.
The eye reconsidered, blankly.

After Mass, Bach tried out the ladder
Calmly, joyously, with confidence.
He scaled the steps with runs of notes,
Ascending, descending, balancing.
The exposition made all clear, except
There are no words to write it down.

The poem is set in Boxgrove Priory in a pretty village a few miles out of Chichester. The Priory church began life in the early 12th century as part of a Benedictine monastery (the chancel), part village church (the nave) until it suffered the usual destruction by Cromwell's men. The village took over the monks' chancel as their parish church and this is where today's eclectic congregation worship alongside extensive ruins in the grounds. To walk into Boxgrove Priory is to walk into a peaceful space, to be surrounded by history and beauty: Stone vaulting, flower-decorated in 1532 by a Netherlander, a unique Gothic-Tudor chantry chapel covered by lively stone carvings, a modern west window on the theme, 'Creation'.

Boxgrove Priory is also a superb sound box for the excellent adult choir and their organist whose playing of Bach finishes Mass to perfection.

What else to say about the poem? '*Let my prayer be as incense*' is from Psalm 14.

The poem has in mind Bath Abbey's 16th century west front depicting Jacob's dream of angels descending from heaven, ascending again up two stone ladders. ND

Elisabeth Angwin lives in Chichester and worships at Boxgrove Priory.

The Future of our Faith

How a gift in your will can secure the future of catholic witness in the Church of England

The catholic movement in the Church of England witnesses to the beauty of holiness. It does this through the high standard of worship it offers in its churches, and through the extensive sacramental and pastoral care it provides within parishes of its tradition.

We trust that, in common with many others, you are drawn to the catholic faith which we have inherited in the Church of England, and that you would like to see it continue to flourish.

We ask that you consider leaving a gift in your will to Forward in Faith. It is the only charity that has been established exclusively to represent the interests of traditional catholics in the Church of England.

This means that Forward in Faith will fight relentlessly for the settlement provided to us by the Church of England in 2014 and will continue to support the ecclesial body which lives out that settlement – The Society.

Together the bishops of The Society provide the sacramental assurance which is fundamental to our faith and at the heart of our longing for a coming together of the universal church through ecumenical dialogue between the great churches of the West and of the East.

Any legacies left will go in their entirety to meeting the charity's objects of proclaiming the catholic faith in the Church of England.

This will be done primarily through the work of the Director of Forward in Faith, assisted by the Administrator, who works with the bishops and clergy of The Society and with the 450 or so Society parishes, with the Catholic Group on General Synod, and with all others who are supportive of our movement to make our case to the Archbishops and the diocesan bishops, to General Synod, and to the media.

It will also be done through Forward in Faith's informative publications, especially through its high-quality magazine *New Directions*.

Please remember Forward in Faith in your will so that we can pass on the catholic faith to the next generation. There are two alternative forms of words to use:

I GIVE to FORWARD IN FAITH of St Andrew Holborn, 5 St Andrew Street, London EC4A 3AF, the sum of _____ pounds (£_____) and I DIRECT that the receipt of the Treasurer or other proper officer of Forward in Faith shall be good and sufficient discharge to my Executor.

I GIVE the residue of my estate to FORWARD IN FAITH of St Andrew Holborn, 5 St Andrew Street, London EC4A 3AF, and I DIRECT that the receipt of the Treasurer or other proper officer of Forward in Faith shall be good and sufficient discharge to my Executor.

We are grateful to you for your support and ask that you join us in praying for our continued catholic witness in the Church of England.

parish directory

BATH Bathwick Parishes, **St.Mary's** (bottom of Bathwick Hill), **St.John's** (opposite the fire station) Sunday - 9.00am Sung Mass at St.John's, 10.30am at St.Mary's 6.00pm Evening Service - 1st, 3rd &5th Sunday at St.Mary's and 2nd & 4th at St.John's. Contact Fr.Peter Edwards 01225 460052 or *www.bathwick-parishes.org.uk*

BEXHILL on SEA St Augustine's, Cooden Drive, TN39 3AZ Saturday: Mass at 6pm (first Mass of Sunday)Sunday: Mass at 8am, Parish Mass with Junior Church at10am. Further details of services and events at St. Augustine's please visit our website: *www.stauguestinesbexhill.org.uk*

BIRMINGHAM St Agatha, Stratford Road, Sparkbrook (B11 1QT) *"If it is worth believing in, it is worth travelling for"* Sunday Mass 11am. Contact 0121 449 2790 *www.saintagathas.org.uk*

BISHOP AUCKLAND St Helen Auckland, Manor Road, West Auckland DL14 9EN. A beautiful medieval church and Society Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. Sunday: Sung Parish Mass 10.00am Wednesday; Mass at 10.00am Messy Church every third Saturday at 11.30am Parish Contacts Mr John Bake 07809 438340 or Mrs Anne Skillcorn 07985 213489 *www.sthelenschurch.co.uk*

BLACKPOOL St Stephen on the Cliffs, Holmfield Road, FY2 9RG. On street parking, fast trams from North Pier. Sunday Low Mass 9am, Choral High Mass 10.30am, Evening Service 6pm. For Daily Masses, see *www.ststephenblackpool.co.uk* for information and contact details. Church open daily 9am-5pm, famous 'Actor's Chapel' and glass. Busy social calendar.

BOSTON LINCOLNSHIRE St Nicholas, Skirbeck *Boston's oldest Parish Church. A Society and Forward in Faith Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough.* For Masses, services and enquiries please visit our website *www.skirbeckstnicholas.com* Rector: Fr Paul Norwood (licensing 26/11/24).

BOURNEMOUTH St Ambrose, West Cliff Road, BH4 8BE. *A Parish under the patronage of Ss. Wilfrid & Hilda.* Sunday: 8am Low Mass BCP, 10am Sung Mass Traditional Ceremonial (CW), 4pm Solemn Evensong, 2nd Sunday of the month Solemn Evensong with Benediction. Daily Mass, Monday to Saturday, at 8.45am and Daily Evening Prayer, Monday to Saturday, at 5.30pm. Parish Priest Fr Adrian Pearce SSC 01202 911569; Parish office 01202 766772. Email: *afpear2@gmail.com*

BOWBURN, Durham Christ the King, DH6 5DS; *A parish of the Society, under the care of the Bishop of Beverley.* Durham City's 'Forward in Faith' parish. Sunday: 11am Sung Mass and Sunday School; Weekday Mass: Wed 10am, Fri 12 noon; Parish Priest: Fr John Livesley ssc 01388 814817

BRADFORD St Chad, Toller Lane, BD8 9DE (B6144, 1 mile from city centre). *Society Parish.* Sunday: Solemn Mass 10.45 am, Evening Prayer 6.30 pm. Wednesday: Mass 7.30 pm. For other information please refer to the website: *https://schads.church*. The parish is currently in vacancy.

BRIGHTON & HOVE WAGNER GROUP St Barnabas' (11am) Fr. John Eldridge 01273 881761 *www.stbarnabas.co.uk* **St Barthlomew's** (10.30am) 01273 064877. *www.stbartholomewsbrighton.org.uk* **St Martin's** (10.30am) Fr Trevor Buxton 01273 604687 *www.stmartinsbrighton.co.uk.*. **St Michael's** (10.30am) Fr John Blackburne 07939 076594 **St Paul's** (11am) 01273 064877 *www.saintpaulschurch.org.uk*. *(Sunday Principal Mass times in brackets.)*

BRISTOL Oswestry parishes All Hallows, Easton BS5 0HH. **Holy Nativity**, Knowle BS4 2AG. Sunday Mass 10:00 a.m. (both Churches), Weekday masses: Tuesday 7:15 p.m & Wednesday 10:00 a.m.(All Hallows). Contacts:Fr Jones Mutemwakwenda 01179551804, *www.allhallowseaston.org* Philip Goodfellow, Churchwarden. 07733 111 800 *phil@holynativity.org.uk* *www.holynativity.org.uk*

BROMLEY St George's Church, Bickley Sunday 8.00am Low Mass, 10.30am Sung Mass. Low Mass 9.30 Tuesday-Saturday (Saturday with Rosary). Parish Priest Fr Henry Everett 0208 295 6411. Parish website: *www.stgeorgebickley.co.uk and find us on Facebook.*

BURGH-LE-MARSH SS. Peter and Paul, Sunday Sung Parish Mass with Sermon at 9.30am, Evensong at 4pm. We are part of a group 10 churches offering a daily Mass and a full sacramental ministry. Call Fr Aiden for details 01754 450815 or search 'burgh and wainfleet churches' for daily services and social media.

CARDIFF near rail, bus, Principality Stadium, city centre and Bay Daily Mass **St Mary**, Bute Street Sunday: Solemn Mass 11am; Parish Priest Fr.Dean Atkins SSC 029 2048 7777 or 07368176300 *www.stmaryscf10.co.com*

CHARD The Good Shepherd, Furnham. *Under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry.* Sunday: Sung Mass 9.45am, Miss Alison Cruickshank 07966 391103 *www.churchofthegoodshepherd-chard.weebly.com*

CHESTERFIELD S. Paul, Hasland, Derbyshire, S41 0JX Sunday: Sung Parish Mass 10.30am, Low Mass: Wednesday 10.30am, Benediction: Last Tuesday 7:15 pm, Cell Mass: 2nd Friday 7:15 pm. **S. James the Apostle**, Temple Normanton, Derbyshire, S42 5DB Sunday: Parish Mass 9am. Contact: Fr. Geoffrey Borrowdale SSC 01246 232486 *frgeoffrey@stpaulshasland.com* *www.stpaulshasland.com*

COVENTRY St Oswald's Church, Tile Hill Morning Prayer 9am Daily apart from Wednesday & Sunday. Evening Prayer 6pm Daily. Rosary Prayers 1pm Tuesday. Mass 9:30am Wednesday. Mass 10am Sunday. Fr Edward Backhouse SSC - 07485 493418, Church Office – 07512924401. Find us on Facebook/Instagram: St Oswald's, Tile Hill *www.stoswalds.co.uk*

DERBY St Anne's. Sunday Sung Mass 1115. For directions and details of weekday Masses (usually 1200 on Wednesdays) and Choral Evensong with Benediction (usually the Third Sunday of the month) - see our Facebook page. Fr Giles Orton SSC 07768 827101

DEVIZES St.Peter's, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire. *Society of St.Wilfrid and St.Hilda parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry.* Sundays 10am Sung Mass. Wednesdays 10.30am Low Mass. On major festivals & Saints' Days - times vary. Contact Fr David Swyer 01722 320033 *stpetersdevizes@outlook.com* *www.achurchnearyou.com/9679*

DEWSBURY St Saviour's, Ravensthorpe. *A parish under the care of the Bishop of Beverley.* Sundays 10 am Sung Mass. For further details - 'A Church Near You' WF13 3JR, and follow us on Facebook "Savvylove". 07388507282

DONCASTER St Wilfrid's, Cantley DN4 6QR *A beautiful and historically significant church with much Comper restoration. A Society Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. Modern catholic worship with a friendly atmosphere.* Sunday: 8am Mass and 10.45am Parish Mass. Wednesday: 9.30am Mass (followed by coffee morning). Friday: 8pm Mass. Saturday 9.30am Mass. Visitors very welcome. Contact: Fr. Andrew Howard ssc. (01302) 285316, mob. 0774 0932758 *fatherahoward@gmail.com*

EASTBOURNE St Saviour's *A Society Parish.* Sunday: Said Mass 9.00am Solemn Mass 10.30am. Daily Mass & Office. For details and information contact Fr.Mark McAulay SSC, 01323 722317 *www.stsaviourseastbourne.org.uk*

FOLKESTONE Kent, **St Peter on the East Cliff** *A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough.* Solemn Mass: Sunday at 10.30 am. Weekday Mass: Thursday at 12 noon, preceded by coffee/tea at 11 am; We are currently in interregnum (check website newsletter). Contact: The Churchwarden 07947 064863 *http://stpetersfolkestone.co.uk* e-mail: *warden.john@stpetersfolkestone.co.uk*

GRIMSBY St Augustine, Legsby Avenue Lovely Grade II Church by Sir Charles Nicholson. *A Forward in Faith Parish under Bishop of Richborough.* Sundays: Parish Mass 10am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction 6pm (Third Sunday). Contact telephone number 07941894822

HALIFAX St Paul, King Cross: Queens Road, HX1 3NU. Sunday: 11.00 Solemn Mass; Occasional Choral Evensong. *www.stpaulskingcross.co.uk*

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD St Francis of Assisi, Hammerfield, Glenview Road, HP1 1TD. *Under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough.* Sunday Sung Mass at 10am. Solemn Evensong and Benediction at 6.30pm as announced. Traditional rite and ceremonial sung to Merbecke. Vicar: Fr.Michael Macey, 01442 243258 e-mail: *vicar@stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk*

KINGSTON-upon-THAMES St Luke's, Gibbon Road (short walk from Kingston railway station) Sunday services: 8am Low Mass (English Missal), 10.30am Sung Mass (Western Rite), 5pm Evensong. Weekday services Tuesday to Friday 9am Mass. For further information phone the Parish Office 0759 2408419. Web page: *www.stlukeskingston.uk*

LINCOLN All Saints, Monks Road. LN2 5JN. *Society & F in F Parish under the care of the Bishop of Richborough.* Sundays – Sung Mass 9.30am, Evensong & Benediction 6pm. Weekday Masses – Monday 7pm (Rosary at 6.15pm), Tuesday 10:30am, Thursday 7pm (Adoration from 6.15pm), Friday 10am, Saturday 10am. Vicar: Fr Sion Hughes Carew – 01522 708574 *www.all-saints-monksroad.com* Facebook- All Saints Church, Monks Road

LOFTUS St Leonard with **St Helen**, Carlin How with Skinningrove, North Yorkshire.Sunday 9am Said Mass at St Helen's Church. Sunday 10:30am Family Mass with Sunday School at St Leonard's Church. Parish Priest, The Revd Canon Adam Gaunt *AdamGaunt@btinternet.com* 01287 644047 Website: *www.loftusparish.co.uk* and *www.facebook.com/loftusparish*

LONDON EC3 St Magnus the Martyr, Lower Thames Street (nearest Tube: Monument or Bank) *A Society Parish Under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Fulham.* Mass: Sunday 11am, refreshments following, Tues, Wed, Thur and Fri 12.30. [Midweek mass subject to change] Visitors very welcome. Website: *www.stmtm@org.uk* *rector@stmtm.org.uk*

LONDON E1W St Peter's, London Docks , Wapping Lane. Nearest station is Wapping (Overground). Buses: D3 or 100. *A registered parish of the Society of St Wilfrid & St Hilda.* Sunday Masses: 9.15am and 10.30am. Contact: Fr Jonathan Beswick SSC 0207 481 2985. For daily mass and office times please see website. *www.stpeterslondondocks.org.uk*

LONDON N21 Holy Trinity, Winchmore Hill, Green Lanes, N21 3RS. *A parish under the Bishop of Fulham.*. Every Sunday: 10.30am Mass with Junior Church. Weekdays: Mondays 10.30am Mass; Wednesdays 11.30am Rosary or Benediction & 12noon Mass; Fridays 12noon Mass *fr.morris@hotmail.com* 07523 203057 *www.holytrinitywinchmorehill.org.uk*

LONDON NW3 All Hallows Gospel Oak, Hampstead, NW3 2LD *A Society Parish under the Episcopal care of The Bishop of Fulham.* Solemn Mass on Sundays at 10am. Fr.James Elston ssc. *www.ahgo.co.uk fr.james@ahgo.co.uk*

LONDON NW9 St Andrew's, Kingsbury (Wembley Park tube station then 83 bus (direction Golders Green) to Tudor Gardens.) *A Society Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham .* Sunday: Sung Mass 10.30am, Thursday: Mass 10.00am – both followed by refreshments. Contact: Fr.Jason Rendell on 020 8205 7447 or *standrews.kingsbury@london.anglican.org* - *www.standrewskingsbury.org.uk*

LONDON SE11 4BB St Agnes Kennington Park, St Agnes Place. *Under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham.* 8 minutes walk from both Kennington and the Oval tube stations (Northern line) Sunday: 10am Solemn Mass. Daily Mass: Mon, Tue, Thur & Fri 10am. *www.saintagnes.org.uk* 020 7820 8050

LONDON SE13 St Stephen, Lewisham (opposite Lewisham Station) *A Forward in Faith Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham.* Sunday: Parish Mass 10am. Weekdays: 12 noon. Saturday: 10.30am. Parish Priest: Fr.Michael Bailey - 07713 258429 *www.sswsml.com*

Continued on next page

LONDON SW1 St Gabriel, Pimlico Sunday: Mass 8am; Sung Parish Mass 10:30am. Choral Evensong and Benediction (termtime) 6pm. Wednesday: School mass (termtime) 9.15am; Choral Evensong (termtime) 5.30pm. Midweek Mass: Tues 10am, Wed 6.30pm, Thurs 9:30am, Fri 9.30am, Sat 9:30am. ***www.stgabrielspimlico.org.uk***

LONDON SW7 St Stephen, Gloucester Road (entrance in Southwell Gardens) *A Fulham Jurisdiction Parish.* Modern rite, traditional ceremonial, gospel preaching and good music. Sunday: Masses 9am and 11am (Solemn). Daily Mass: Tues 12.30pm, Wed 7pm, Thur 12.30pm, Fri 6pm, Sat 9.30am. Holy Hour: every Friday 5pm. Fr.Philip Barnes SSC Contact: 020 7370 3418. Email: ***saint.stephen@homecall.co.uk*** ***www.saint-stephen.org.uk***

LONDON SW11 The Ascension, Lavender Hill. *Famous and flourishing Resolution and Society Parish, in the care of the Bishop of Fulham.* Sunday: Solemn Mass at 11am. Weekday Masses: Tuesday at 10am; Wednesday at 19.30; Saturday at 11.30. Rosary: Saturday 11am. Active SOLW Cell which organises pilgrimage, social & fundraising activities. Parish Priest: Fr Philip Kennedy CMP. Contact: 020 7228 5340 ***ascensionsw11@gmail.com***

LONDON SW19 All Saints, South Wimbledon. *Society Parish Under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Fulham.* Sunday Solemn Mass 11am. For other masses and services contact Fr Christopher Noke 020 8940 6106, the church office 020 8542 5514 or see ***https://allsaintschurchsouthwimbledon.com/***

LONDON WC1 The English Chapel, Gordon Square *The Forward in Faith Chapel.* Chapel open Tuesday to Thursday 8.30am-3.30pm, Mass at 12.30pm, on Thursday Mass is followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Other services as announced. Contact Fr Peter Hudson SSC 07979539762 or email: ***chaplain@forwardinfaith.com***

LOWESTOFT St John the Baptist, Lound. *Society Parish under the Episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Richborough.* A warm welcome awaits you at our listed medieval building with a superb interior by Sir Ninian Comper. Sung Mass 2nd & 4th Sundays each month. Please contact Judith Hobbs 01502 732536 (info@loundchurch.uk) or Kevin Turner 07828661970 for further details. See also ***www.loundchurch.uk***

MAIDSTONE St Michael and All Angels Tonbridge Road ME16 8JS Sunday Sung Mass 10.30am, Low Mass Thursday 10.30am and as advertised. Fr John Ainslie ***revjohnainslie@gmail.com, www.stmichaelallangels.org.uk***

MANCHESTER M27 The Parish of Swinton and Pendlebury: All Saints, Wardley; **Saint Augustine**, Pendlebury; **Saint Peter**, Swinton. *A Society Parish.* Sunday Masses: 8am and 5.30pm (SP), Sung at 9.30am (AS), 10.30am (SP) and 11am (SA). Daily Mass in Parish. Fr Jeremy Sheehy 0161 794 1578, Parish Office: 0161 727 8175 email: ***paroffsandp@btconnect.com***

MILTON KEYNES St Martin's Church Fenny Stratford, Aylesbury Street. MK2 2BU. A Society Parish under the Bishop of Oswestry. Sunday Parish Mass: 10 am. Weekday Masses: Tuesday 6.30 pm. Wednesday 12.15 pm. Thursday, Friday & Saturday 10 am. For further details visit our website: ***www.saintmartinschurch.co.uk*** Tel: 07714 190 663. Vicar: Canon Victor Bullock O.S.B.

MIDDLESBROUGH The Church of St Columba Sunday: Mass 9.30am. **St John the Evangelist** Sunday Mass 11am. For further information contact Fr Paul Kronbergs SSC 01642 356160

NEWMARKET St Mary the Virgin Newmarket CB8 0HP *A Society Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough.* Sunday: Holy Communion BCP 8.00 am, Sung Mass 9.45 am. Wednesday: Holy Communion, BCP 10 am, Friday: Said Mass with Sacrament of Reconciliation. Parish Priest: Fr Jeremy Lind 07500 794303. ***jeremylind55@gmail.com*** ***https://stmarysnewmarket.org.uk***

NORFOLK BROADS The Benefice of St Benedict Six beautiful and historic churches centred around the village of Horning. Sunday Sung Mass at either 9.30am or 11am. For further details please contact the Parish Priest. Fr Ben Bradshaw SSC- ***brother_ben@btinternet.com*** or 01692 630216

OXFORD St Laurence, South Hinksey (OX1 5AQ) with **St John the Evangelist**, New Hinksey (OX1 4RE) Comper's Hidden Gem -*A Society Parish under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Oswestry.* St Laurence: Sundays 9.15am. St John's: Sundays 10.45am High Mass, Mondays 10.30am and Wednesdays 7pm Low Mass. Free parking outside church and warm welcome. Contact: Fr Thomas Fink-Jensen, 01865 807875 or ***www.hinkseychurch.org***

PORTSMOUTH St Saviour and **The Ascension**, *Society Parishes under the Bishop of Richborough.* **The Ascension** PO2 0JG, Parish Mass 11am. Low Mass: Thursday 7pm. **St Saviour** PO2 8PB, Parish Mass 9.30am. Low Mass: Monday 10am, Wednesday 11.30am, Friday 7pm. Solemn Evensong and Benediction (last Sunday) 6pm. Modern rite, traditional ceremonial. Fr Benjamin Weitzmann SSC 02392439711 ***www.ascensionportsmouth.org.uk***

PRESTON St George's, (PR1 2NP) - 'Preston's Hidden Gem'. *Affiliated to The Society.* Sunday - 10.30am Parish Mass. For Daily Masses see website. Parish Priest: Fr David Craven SSC (01772 755125 or ***dacraven@hotmail.com***) ***www.sgp.org.uk*** or ***www.facebook/stgeorgethemartyr preston***

READING St Giles-in-Reading, Southampton Street (next to the Oracle). Medieval church. *Forward in Faith, affiliated with The Society.* Sunday: Parish Mass 10.30am; Low Mass 6pm. Daily Offices (Mattins, Evensong) and Daily Mass (except Mondays, check website for times). Compline daily online at 9pm. Regular study groups, see our website. Parish Priest Fr.David Harris 0118 957 2831. ***sgiles.vicar@gmail www.sgilesreading.org.uk***

REDDITCH St.Peter's Church, Crabbs Cross, Littlewoods, Redditch, B97 5LB - Services: Sunday Sung Mass 10.30am, Thursday Said Mass 10.30am. Friday Stations of the Cross 10am. Parish Priest Fr G Reading. Contact: Diane Mowatt 01527 542222

SALISBURY St Martin – *the oldest Church in Salisbury. We can be found in St. Martin's Church Street just over the inner city ring road. Walk up St. Ann Street from the Close and through the tunnel. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry.* Parish Mass at 10:30am. For further information about the Daily Office, weekday mass and confession see ***www.sarumstmartin.org.uk***. or call 01722503123. Parish Priest: Fr David Swyer 01722 320033

SCARBOROUGH St Saviour with All Saints, *Parish affiliated to the Society of Ss Wilfrid and Hilda and under the Episopal Care of the Bishop of Beverley.* Sunday Mass 11am with refreshments to follow. Evening Prayer and Benediction as announced. Weekday masses: Thursday 10am. Major Festivals times vary. ***stsaviour-scarborough.org.uk***

SOUTH SHIELDS, St Michael and All Angels, South Westoe, NE33 3PD. *A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley.* Sunday: Mass (BCP) 8am and Sung Mass 11am. Evensong and Benediction, first Sunday of the month, 5pm. Weekday Masses: Monday 9am, Tuesday 6pm and Thursday 11am (BCP). Contact Fr Mark Mawhinney SSC: 0191-454-8060 ***fathermarkmawhinney@gmail.com***

SPENNYMOOR, CO. DURHAM St Andrew, Tudhoe Grange, DL16 6NE *A parish of the Society, under the care of the Bishop of Beverley;* Sundays: 9am Sung Mass with Sunday School, Last Sunday of the month - 10.15am-11.30am "Messy Church" in the hall for children and families, 6pm Evensong (with Benediction on 1st Sunday of month); Weekday Masses: Tues 7pm, Thurs 10am.Parish Priest: Fr John Livesley SSC - 01388 814817

SUNDERLAND St.Aidan, Ryhope Road, Sunderland , SR2 9RS. *A Parish of the Society under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley.* Weekday Masses: Monday 9.30am, Tuesday 12.30pm, Wednesday 9.30am, Thursday 6.30pm and Saturday 9.30am. Rosary Monday 6pm. Confessions Sat 6.15 pm or by appointment. Parish Office; Thursdays 6.00-6.30pm. Contact: Vicar Fr David Raine SSC: 0191 5143485, ***farvad@sky.com***

SUNDERLAND St Mary Magdalene, Parish Office, 22 Wilson Street, SR6 4HJ. *A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley.* Sunday: Parish Mass 10.30am, Benediction 6.30pm, Mass 7pm. Weekdays: Mass 10.30am Wed, 7.30pm Thurs, 7.30am Fri, Rosary 7.15pm Thurs. Confessions by appointment. ***www.st-marymagdalene.co.uk*** Visit our Facebook page

SUTTON All Saints, Benhilton *A Parish of the Society in the care of the Bishop of Fulham.* Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Solemn Mass 9.30am. Weekdays Tuesday 7.30am, Wednesday 7.30pm, Thursday 10am, Friday 7.30am, Saturday 10am. For further information please contact Fr Chris Phillips SSC (07917 798285)

SWINDON Parish of Swindon New Town *A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry.* Sunday Masses: 9.00am S. Saviour's; 10.30am S. Mark's; 11am S. Luke's. For Daily Mass see ***https://swindonnewtown.co.uk***. Contact 01793 538220 ***office@psnt.uk***

TAUNTON Holy Trinity, Trinity St, Taunton, TA1 3JG. *Society Parish.* Modern Catholic liturgy. Musical tradition. Sunday Services 8,10 & 6.30. Daily Mass. Fr Julian Laurence SSC, Vicar. See website for full details of services and events ***holytrinitytaunton.org***

TIPTON, West Midlands St John the Evangelist, Upper Church Lane, DY4 9ND. *A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry.* Sunday Parish Mass 9.30am. During the vacancy, please check times on 'A Church Near You' or contact Churchwardens: Annmarie Hinde 07940 991306 or Glenis Darby 07958 371611

TIVIDALE, Oldbury, West Midlands St. Michael, Tividale Road B69 2LQ and **Holy Cross**, Ashleigh Road B69 1LL. *A Society Parish.* Sunday: Parish Mass 11am (St.Michael's), Sunday School 2 pm (Holy Cross). Contact: Currently Vacant ***frmennis@gmail.com***, ***www.vicaroftividale.co.uk***

N. YORKSHIRE near Skipton. *Three rural parishes .* Sundays: **THORNTON-IN-CRAVEN St Mary** 9.15am Holy Communion; **MARTONs BOTH St Peter** 10.45am Holy Communion; 2nd Sunday in the month it is Morning Prayer at 10.45am; **BROUGHTON All Saints Church** (March - October) 2nd Sunday in the month - 10.45am Holy Communion; 4th Sunday in the month – 3pm Holy Communion; (November - February) 2nd Sunday in the month – 10.45am. Holy Communion. Service times in the Parish can change and visitors are advised to check our website to confirm Services; ***https://www.bmtparish.co.uk/***

WALSINGHAM St Mary & All Saints, Church Street. *A Society and Forward in Faith Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough.* Sunday: Solemn Mass, 11.00 am Weekdays: please see ***www.walsinghamparishes.org.uk*** Contact: Fr Andrew Bishop SSC, 01328 821316

WEST KIRBY S. Andrew, Graham Road, Wirral, CH48 5DQ. *Parish of the Society under the pastoral care of the Bishop of Beverley.* Sunday 11 AM Sung Mass. Evensong and Benediction 6pm Last Sunday in the Month. Tuesday 10am Low Mass. Thursday 7pm Low Mass. Friday 12 Noon Low Mass. Traditional Church of England Parish in the Diocese of Chester, visitors always warmly welcomed. ***https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/12709/*** ***https://www.facebook.com/saintandrewswestkirby/***

WESTON SUPER MARE All Saints with St Saviour, All Saints Road, BS23 2NL. *We are an Affinity Parish with St John the Evangelist, Clevedon. A Member of the Society under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry. All are welcome.* Sundays 10.30am Parish Mass, Weekdays 10.00am Mass (Tue, Thu & Sat) Priest-in-Charge: Fr Brendan Clover Tel: 0796 8505643 e-mail: ***parishpriest@stjohns-clevedon.org.uk*** - Parish Office 01934 415379 ***allsaintsandstsaviour@btconnect.com*** Visit our website ***www.allsaintswsm.org***

WEYMOUTH St Paul, Abbotsbury Road DT4 0BJ *Under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry.* Sundays: Morning Prayer 9.45am, Sung Mass 10.30am (creche and Sunday school from 10.00am), Evensong and Benediction 5pm (BST) or 4pm (GMT). For daily service times see www.stpaulsweymouth.org or ring Vicar: Fr.Gregory Lipovsky on 07796 963703 or ***stpweymouth@gmail.com***

WINCHESTER Holy Trinity. *A Society Church under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough.* Sunday: Sung Mass 10.30am. Weekday Said Mass : Thur 12 noon. Contact: Fr Jamie Franklin, 07883 184934, Email: ***fatherjamie@holytrinitywinchester.co.uk***

YORK All Saints, North Street (near Radisson Hotel) *A Society Parish.* Sunday: Low Mass 10.30am [1st Sunday], Sung or High Mass 5.30pm, Thursday Low Mass 12.30pm. Feast Days are observed on the Day. Visitors to York's finest medieval church are always welcome; the church is normally open during daylight hours. Website: ***www. allsaints-northstreet.org.uk***

Diocesan Directory

FiF, DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM *Society Parishes* Kingstanding St Luke 0121 354 3281, Kingstanding St Mark 0121 360 7288, Small Heath All Saints 0121 772 0621, Sparkbrook St Agatha 0121 449 2790, Washwood Heath St Mark & Saltley St Saviour* 0121 328 9855

FiF, DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY *Society parishes* Deal St Andrew 01843 527 576, Folkestone St Peter 07947 064863 (Warden), Harbledown St Michael 01227 479377, Maidstone St Michael 01628 629827, Ramsgate Holy Trinity 01843 527576, Rough Common St.Gabriel 01227 479377

FiF, DIOCESE OF CHESTER Congleton St James the Great, *Society*, Vacant. Contact Patrick Andrew 01260278882; Crewe St Barnabas, *Society*, Fr Ralph Powell 01270 212418; Crewe St Michael, *Coppenhall*, *Society*, Fr. John Leal SSC 01270 215151; Knutsford St John the Baptist, *Society*, Rev Nigel Atkinson 01565 632834/755160; Liscard St Thomas the Apostle, *Society*, Fr. Brian Bell 01516332185; Stockport St Peter, Vacant. Contact David Copage 01614948945 ; West Kirby St Andrew, *Society*, Fr. Brian Bell 01516332185

FiF, DIOCESE OF COVENTRY Coventry Centre: St John the Baptist (Fr Dexter Bracey 024 7671 1687); Holbrooks: St Luke (Fr Simon Oakes 024 7668 8604); Radford: St Nicholas (024 7659 9152) ; Nuneaton: St Mary the Virgin (Fr Roger Butcher 024 7638 2936).

FiF, DIOCESE OF DERBY Calow: St.Peter, Interregnum, contact: Sheila Cotton, 01246 202538; Derby: St Anne, Parish Priest Fr.Giles Orton SSC 01168 827101 *frgilesorton@fastmail.fm* ; St Bartholomew and St Luke, Fr Peter Jackson SSC, 07443 294480 *priest@stlukesderby.org.uk* ; Hasland St Paul and Temple Normanton St James: Fr Geoffrey Borrowdale 01246 232 486 *frgeoffrey@stpaulshasland.com*; Ilkeston Holy Trinity, Contact Geoffrey Raby 07905 323116 *geoffreyraby@aol.com;* Long Eaton St Laurence, Interregnum, 07469529261 *stlaurence.longeaton@gmail.com*; Staveley St John Baptist with Inkersall St Columba and Barrow Hill St Andrew: Team Vicar Fr.Adrian Arnold, 07933 546370 *fraparnold@gmail.com*

DIOCESE OF EXETER *FiF Recommended Parishes:* Bovey Tracey St John, Fr. M. Cashmore – 07555 924862; Exeter St Michael & All Angels, *Heavitree*; St Lawrence, *Lower Hill Barton Rd*; St Mary Steps, *West Street*, Fr.B.Rabjohns 01392 677150; Newton Abbot St Luke, *Milber*, Fr. M. Cashmore – 07555 924862; Plymouth St Peter, Plymouth, St Thomas, Keyham, Fr D Way – 01752 240119; Plymouth St Francis, Honicknowle – vacant (contact Fr D Way – 01752 240119); Plymouth St Batholomew and St Mark, Milehouse - vacant (contact Fr D Way); Plymouth St Gabriel, Peverell – vacant (contact Fr D Way); North Torquay St Mary the Virgin, St Marychurch, St Martin, Barton, All Saints, Babbacombe, Fr Nick Debney – 01803 914771; South Torquay All Saints, Torre, St John over the Harbour, Fr P March – 01803 312754

DIOCESE OF GUILDFORD, Society Parishes Aldershot St Augustine, Fr William Perry - 01276 609498, Hawley Holy Trinity and All Saints, Fr.William Perry - 01276 609498. - *For further contact details and details of all activities, events etc in both parishes, visit the church web sites* *www.staugustine-aldershot.org.uk* *and* *www.parishofhawley.org.uk*

LEEDS FiF, WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF LEEDS Belle Isle & Hunslet St John & St Barnabas, Sunday Mass 11am, Vicar: Vacancy; Cookridge Holy Trinity, Sunday Mass 10am , Vicar: Fr Paul Atkinson SSC, 0113 2931210; Cross Green St Hilda, Sunday Mass 0930 Vicar: Felicity Greenfield (Churchwarden) 07583 155295; Harehills St Wilfrid, vacant: Sunday Mass 10am contact Lynne Dransfield [Churchwarden] tel: 0113 2730323

FiF, DIOCESE OF LINCOLN Resolution Parishes: Binbrook Group (Louth) Fr.McEune 07411 761883; Edenham Group (Bourne) Fr.Martin 01778 591358; Grimsby St Augustine vacant contact Mr D. Buten 07848 819068; Lincoln, All Saints: Fr.Noble 01 522 524319 Skirbeck St Nicholas *(Boston)* & Fosdyke All SS (Kirton) contact Fr.J.Underhill 01 205 362734; Wainfleet Group (Skegness) Vacant until March Contact Mr J. Seymour 01754 881046; Burgh-le- Marsh (Skegness) Vacant until March. Contact Miss L. Kent 01507 463275). Non-petitioning parishes information: South Lincolnshire- Fr Martin 01778 591358; North Lincolnshire- Fr Noble - 01 522 524319

FiF, DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER Blackley Most Holy Trinity, Canon Paul Hutchins - 0161 681 3644; Chadderton St Mark, Fr.Steven Smith - 0161 624 0535; Failsworth Holy Family, Canon Paul Hutchins - 0161 681 3644; Hollinwood St Margaret, Fr Tom Davis - 0161 681 4541; Leigh St Thomas & All Saints, Vacancy - Church Warden - 07921557446; Lightbowne St Luke, Canon Paul Hutchins - 0161 681 364; Little Lever St Matthew, Fr. Robert Eloff, 01204 700396; Lower Broughton The Ascension, Canon. Falak Sher - 0161 736 8868; Middleton Junction St Gabriel, Fr.Steven Smith - 0161 624 2005; Moss Side Christ Church, Vacancy - 07887811676; Oldham St James with St Ambrose, Fr Lewis Oliver - 0161 943 0119; Peel Green St Michael, Fr.Ian Hall - 0161 788 8991; Prestwich St Hilda, Fr Ronald Croft 07395 160 845; Royton St Paul, Fr Lewis Oliver, 0161 943 0119; Salford St Paul, Vacancy - Church Warden - 07493 497041; Swinton and Pendlebury St.Peter, St.Augustine, All Saints , Fr Jeremy Sheehy 0161 727 8175; Tonge Moor, Bolton St Augustine, Fr Tony Davies 01204 523899; Winton St Mary Magdalene, Fr Ian Hall 0161 788 8991; Withington St Crispin, Fr Patrick Davies 0161 224 3452

FiF, DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH *Society Parishes:* Isle of Wight: All Saints, *Godshill*; St Alban, *Ventnor*; The Good Shepherd, *Lake*; St Saviour on the Cliff, *Shanklin*, (Fr Tony Lawrence 07753 523797. Portsea: The Ascension, *North End*; St Saviour, *Stamshaw* (Fr.Benjamin Weitzmann 023 9243 9711). Southsea Holy Spirit, (Fr.Russell Lawson 023 9229 6364;)

FiF, DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER St James, Elmers End 9.15am Sung Mass; St Michael, Beckenham 11am Sung Mass; Belvedere St Augustine, 10am Sung Mass; Swanley St Mary, 10am Sung Mass; Bickley St George, 8am Low Mass, 10.30am Sung Mass; Chislehurst The Annunciation, 8am Low Mass, 10am Sung Mass; Gillingham St Luke, Parish Mass 10.30am; Gravesend, *Perry Street*, All Saints, Sung Mass 10am; Higham St John, 9.30am Sung Mass; Sevenoaks St John, 9am Low Mass, 10am Sung Mass; Tunbridge Wells St Barnabas, 11am Sung Mass; all contact details from Fr Clive Jones *clivewjones@outlook.com*

FiF, DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS *Society Parishes* Bedford St Martin, Vacant; Bushey Heath St Peter, Fr Burton 020 8950 1424; Luton: Holy Cross, *Marsh Farm*, vacant; St Mary, Sundon & St Saviour, Fr Smejkal 01582 583076. *(Please contact clergy for details of services)*

FiF, DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY and IPSWICH Cookley St.Michael and All Angels, Fr.Jonathan Olanczuk, 01 502 470079, 9.30am Mass (3rd Sunday in Month); Ipswich St. Bartholemew, Fr Paul Carter 01473 727441. Sunday Mass 10am. ; Ipswich St Mary at the Elms, Fr.John Thackray 07780 613754. Sunday Mass 10.45am, daily Mass at 12.30pm; Mendlesham St Mary, Fr Philip Gray 01449 766359; Eye SS Peter and Paul - The Rev.Dr.Guy Sumpter 01 379 871986.

FiF, DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD Bolton-on-Dearne St Andrew, Fr.Schaefer 01 709 898426; Cantley St Wilfrid, Fr Andrew Howard 01302 285 316; Edlington St John the Baptist, Fr Richard Hume 01709 231326; Goldthorpe SS John and Mary Magdalene, Fr Schaefer 01709 898426; Hexthorpe St Jude, Fr Richard Hume 01709 231326; Hickleton St Wilfrid, Fr Schaefer 01709 898426; Hoyland St Peter, Vacancy 07593 649895; Mexborough St John the Baptist, Fr. Morrison 01 709 582321; Moorends St Wilfrith, Fr Pay 07530921952; New Bentley Ss Philip and James, vacant; New Cantley St Hugh, Fr Andrew Howard 01302 2850316; New Rossington St Luke, vacant; Ryecroft: St Nicholas vacant; Dalton: Holy Trinity, vacant; Doncaster Ss Leonard & Jude (with St Luke) Fr. D'Silva 01 302 784858; Sheffield: St Bernard, *Southey Green* and St Cecilia, *Parson Cross*, Fr Ryder-West 0114 2493916; St Catherine, *Richmond Road*, Fr.Knowles 0114 2399598; St Matthew, *Carver Street*, Fr.Grant Naylor 01 142 665681; St Mary, *Handsworth*, Fr Johnson 01142 692403 *(contact clergy for Mass times, etc)*

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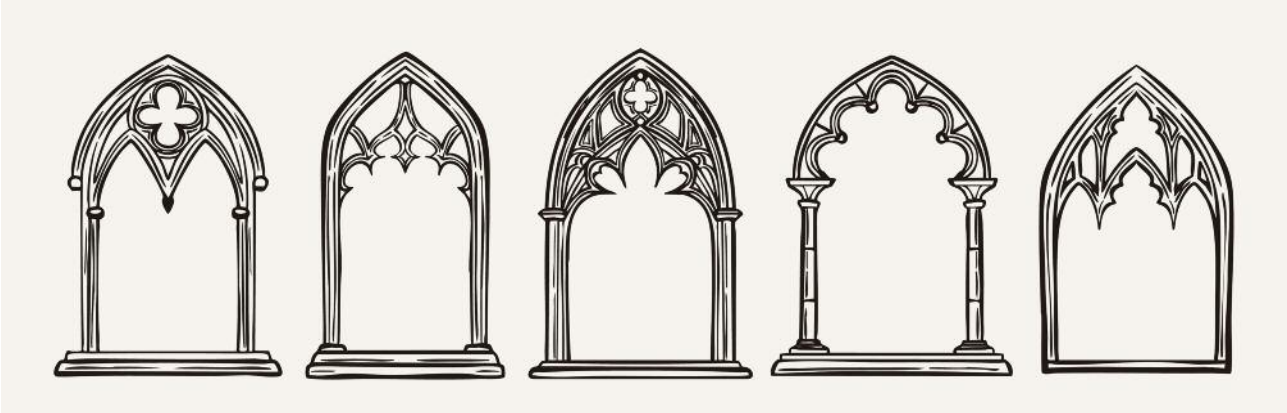
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AFTERWORD

The best is silence

Ironing ranks highly on my list of most disliked domestic chores. During my working life, shirts, clerical and lay, were sent away to be laundered and returned in individual cellophane wrapping beautifully crisp. Ecclesiastical pension penury has ended, cruelly, those halcyon days, now fondly remembered but a distant memory.

What are those blue remembered hills…
That is the land of lost content,
I see it shining plain,
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again. (*A Shropshire Lad* A. E. Housman)

To ease the burden and to distract me from enervating boredom, I watch some vacuous daytime television programme that requires no intellectual effort or real engagement but is just about sufficient to divert me from the ironing.

Recently, however, I decided on something to improve my mind rather than merely divert it into televisual mush. Televised concerts might be a suitable corrective. Listening to the music and seeing the performers while wielding the iron. Recently, good fortune attended my first excursion as I chanced upon a gem of a programme. Scrolling through the estimable and extensive resource that is YouTube I came across a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* by Sir Edward Elgar, a setting of a poem by St John Henry Newman. It is one of my favourite works not least because it contains these haunting, beautiful words on the nature of death:

That sense of ruin
Which is worse than pain
That masterful negation and collapse
Of all that makes me man.

It was not a televised concert but a performance filmed, without an audience, in Canterbury Cathedral and one of the first programmes to be shown in colour. The London Philharmonic Orchestra was conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

He was one of the four great English conductors of my young and teenage years: Sir Thomas Beecham, Sir Malcolm Sargent, and Sir John Barbirolli were the others. The only one I saw conduct live was Sir John. He conducted the Halle Orchestra in two concerts on consecutive evenings in Newcastle City Hall. The piece which I recall most vividly was Berlioz *Symphony Fantastique.* The next time that I was due to see him was a few years later in 1970 at the Edinburgh Festival. However, he died only a few weeks before the concert. His replacement was already prominent in the next generation, Colin Davis.

The most memorable concert that I remember was also at the Edinburgh Festival a few years later. It was conducted by Carlo Maria Guilini, a mesmerising, galvanising conductor. The *Dies Irae* was electrifying, so much so that I thought I would not hear anything again as thrilling and should leave the concert hall. Fortunately, I was in the middle of a row and did not wish to disturb others.

The soloists were Florenze Cossotto (a wonderfully rich mezzo-soprano), Rafael Ari (a sturdy baritone). The soprano was to have been Martina Arroyo but she was taken ill and a last-minute substitute had been found. As I was walking down the Royal Mile towards the Usher Hall, the concert venue, a fleet of three or four limousines, with police car and motorcycle escort, sirens blaring, traffic halted, swept down Prince's Street to the Usher Hall. It turned out to be the substitute soprano, Rita Hunter. She had been performing in France and was to return there the following evening. Short, stocky, she held the open score pressed to her bosom, never once glancing at it, and sang magnificently. She was later a much-admired Brunhild in the ENO production of *The Ring* in which I also saw her. The tenor was a relatively young Italian, aged thirty-five, Luciano Pavarotti: whatever happened to him?

Numbered among those members of the British public of whom Thomas Beecham remarked that they, 'know nothing about music but they like the noise it makes'. I have no musical ability whatsoever. In the distant past of what passed for my career, I presided at High Mass at Pusey House. I sang (I use the term loosely and inaccurately) the *Sursum corda* but response from the choir came there none. After Mass, I asked the Master of the Music what had happened. His response is etched in my memory some thirty years later, 'Father, we had no idea on which note you started, no idea on what note you finished and where you went in between heaven knows'. Brutal but fair and accurate.

On another later occasion when I had sung the High Mass, after the dismissal and having returned to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel to divest, the, then, Principal, Fr Philip Ursell, a fine singer and musician, said to me, 'Well done, Father'. 'Why, what have I done?' I replied. 'You sang the Collect on exactly the note on which the choir finished the Gloria'. 'Did I?' I queried with a degree of incredulity mixed with pleasure.

From that amble down memory lane…back to ironing: perhaps the best is silence. ND

William Davage is a retired priest now living in Hampstead

GHOSTLY COUNSEL

Andy Hawes

Digital vs. analogue



I begin to type and I am asked 'would you like co-pilot to rewrite this?' The answer is 'no, I'll stick to my own peculiar use of language and odd spelling'. I have been pondering the question 'how has digital technology affected my relationship with God?'. I have no doubt that it has. In many ways my food for reflection and prayer has been enriched by access to translations, music and images that would have remained closed to me. I now take for granted the ability to answer a question, to come into relationship with the communion of saints in previously unimagined ways.

But, have I become a 'digital Christian' and forgotten that really it is necessary a be, primarily, a serial and analogue Christian. So much of the Christian life is founded on the serial or unfolding narrative of the Old and New Testament; the serial development of Christian doctrine through the work of the Holy Spirit. Everything has a context and place in the Divine engagement with humanity in and through history. Time is being gradually taken up into eternity. One effect of digitalisation is that it atomises this process into (literally) bits. The pieces of the jigsaw are scattered.

I am aware that I witness increasing 'disconnection' and 'contextless' aspects to the spiritual life of the church. The obvious example of this is the service booklet discarding the missal or service book and hymn book for the digitally produced leaflet. With a folded paper sheet in hand there is no sense of living and seeking at a moment in time in the Christian year. There is also often no sense of where a Bible reading comes from, generally words for a hymn or anthem are presented, leaving the reader ignorant about who wrote it and when. It is served up, ready-made; the spiritual equivalent to fast food and can be as nourishing.

Am I wrong in believing it is far more beneficial to put a Bible in someone's hand rather than an extract? Am I wrong in being concerned that this inevitably means the digital world is creating a spiritual landscape without any landmarks or boundaries, where the path is only one moment long? What happens when the networks collapse? What is left to guide and nourish? The digital culture is robbing me of being firmly rooted in the context of Scripture and the Christian tradition, it is de-skilling me of resourcing myself in ways that where once second nature to me.

Alarmed by the prospect of losing my analogue soul I now use books more, both for information and for the daily sustaining of my prayer. I have a joy and I am enriched in finding something out for myself! I am also assured of the veracity of the material I am using. I am developing a new pattern to govern my use of and access of digital media, hopefully making it my servant rather than my being its slave. I am reminded of Jeremiah; 'Thus says the Lord "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it and find rest for your souls".' ND

'Windsor Report' launched on clergy vocations, training and retention

continued from page 19

As *New Directions* 'Director's Cut' in July put it: 'Through the centuries, the Church has lived out its sacramental life – the very essence of its existence – by being there with people, by being alongside them in their joy and in their grief'.

The Revd Paul Benfield wrote in *New Directions* in July about the General Synod elections. If you are on a Deanery Synod, please vote for candidates who support STP. STP has had success increasing Lowest Income Communities funding for poor parishes through lobbying, but a key moment to address the need to rebalance funding will be a promised finance debate in July 2027. There is also clause-by-clause work to be done reviewing legislation, including that which governs parish amalgamations and church closures.

STP needs more clergy and laity to speak out about the crisis in wellbeing. Our mission is to sustain a thriving, cradle-to-grave, parish system with well-trained clergy providing regular worship, pastoral care and sacraments, fully embedded in and serving their local communities.

Please view and register to join our supporters – you will receive email updates on our work about once a month. Please help us in our voluntary campaign to advocate the valuing and prioritising of stipendiary parish ministry. ND

Emma Thompson is a freelance writer and on the Steering Committee of Save the Parish

The Society

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The Society, under the patronage of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda, provides a wealth of resources and statements for the ongoing assurance of sacramental order and doctrine within the life of the Church of England.

Information includes: the registration of priests, deacons and ordinands on the About Us pages; names and contact details of Bishops' Representatives in each diocese; lists of affiliated parishes; publications; brand pack and logo resources.

St Andrew Holborn, 5 St Andrew Street, London EC4A 3AF
020 7388 3588 admin@sswsh.com

Bishops of The Society



The Bishop of Beverley
PROVINCE OF YORK (EXCEPT BLACKBURN)
The Right Revd Stephen Race SSC
The Vicarage, Church Street, Woolley, Wakefield WF4 2JU
07930096642 stephen@seeofbeverley.org.uk



The Bishop of Blackburn
BLACKBURN
The Right Revd Philip North CMP
Bishop's House, Ribchester Road, Blackburn BB1 9EF
01282 479300 bishop@bishopofblackburn.org.uk



The Bishop of Fulham
LONDON & SOUTHWARK
The Right Revd Jonathan Baker
The Vicarage, 5 St Andrew St, London EC4A 3AF 020 7932 1130
bishop.fulham@london.anglican.org www.bishopoffulham.org.uk



The Bishop of Lewes
CHICHESTER
The Right Revd Will Hazlewood SSC
Knowle Cottage, Knowle Lane, Halland, Lewes BN8 6PR
01273 425009 Bishop.Lewes@chichester.anglican.org



The Bishop of Oswestry
PROVINCE OF CANTERBURY: WEST
The Right Revd Paul Thomas SSC
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The Bishop of Richborough
PROVINCE OF CANTERBURY: EAST (EXCEPT CHICHESTER, LONDON & SOUTHWARK); EUROPE
The Right Revd Luke Irvine-Capel SSC
8 Bruce Road, Southsea, PO4 9RL
07477 376834 bishop@seeofrichborough.org.uk www.richborough.org.uk

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(formerly Bishop of Richborough)

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In addition, the Forward in Faith website (www.forwardinfaith.com) offers a number of resources covering material about women bishops and women priests, information on Mutual Flourishing and the House of Bishops' Declaration, articles, addresses, statements, and the Forward in Faith brand pack with logos.

www.sswsh.com

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