

*Fr Hoyal Writes:*

## **FEBRUARY 2012 GENERAL SYNOD**

Synod meets 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> of this month, and the issue of women bishops figures prominently.

In the course of last year, the overwhelming majority of diocesan synods voted in favour of Synod's draft measure to create women bishops.

There was no option of moving any amendment to the particular motion sent down from General Synod for debate.

But in accompanying diocesan motions 13 out of 44 diocesan synods (30%) indicated that they were unhappy with the provision envisaged for church people unable to accept the ministry of women bishops.

These dioceses recognized that bishops appointed to care for the minority cannot meaningfully be delegates of (e.g. women) diocesan bishops whose ministerial authority the minority cannot accept. Rather they need to have legal authority to minister in their own right.

Yet the measure returning to General Synod (and the associated code of practice) is drafted on the premise that bishops appointed to care for the minority will act solely by delegation.

Clearly this is unacceptable to the minority.

In line with the feelings of several other diocesan synods, Manchester diocesan synod has tabled a motion asking General Synod to reconsider the compromise proposal made in 2010 by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

This proposal provides for bishops appointed for the minority integrity to have direct independent legal authority (ie 'jurisdiction') rather than

minister under delegation from a diocesan bishop whose authority may be deemed unacceptable.

At the same time, the proposal carefully avoids any technical dilution in scope of such a diocesan bishop's own jurisdiction. No diocesan, male or female, would be a 'second-class' bishop.

In 2010 this proposal failed in Synod by the narrowest of margins. In present circumstances it has a good chance of succeeding, if put. It may just be enough to prevent substantial further secessions of clergy and lay people from the Church of England.

That said, it is a wafer-thin solution which may not bear the weight of expectation placed upon it. The situation will still be uncomfortable for many traditionalists, if not downright precarious.

For traditionalists nothing will really work, short of a secure legal structure to maintain within the church a continuing uncompromised succession of acceptable minority bishops alongside the majority bishops of the new order.

Here, acceptable means of course bishops ordained in accordance with the universal criteria of two millennia – not to mention the continuing practice of the clear majority in the worldwide Church today among those denominations that value the historic threefold ministry.

A large majority of the Church of England is keen to welcome and enjoy the episcopal ministry of women. It would be wrong at this stage to think of frustrating that, even if this could be done. Opponents must be as welcoming and as cooperative as possible.

On the other hand, the Church of England has repeatedly reaffirmed that "those who dissent from, as well as those who assent to the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate are both loyal Anglicans."

And yet the two integrities will still be on very different footings legally if nothing more than the Archbishops' proposal succeeds. In a church that so prides itself on its inclusivity, how could this be right?

To give just one instance: The measure and the accompanying code of practice before Synod are far less generous than the present system in relation to priestly ministry. Unless successfully amended, they will do away with the legal right of parishes (like our own) to pass Resolutions A and B, and to seek the pastoral care of a Provincial Episcopal Visitor under the Act of Synod.

In any case, it is by no means certain that even the Archbishops' proposal, rejected before, will necessarily succeed this time.

If we want a truly united and inclusive Church that permits some of us to continue believing and doing what our forebears always did, like so much of the wider Church still does, we all have a lot of praying to do.

Do play your part in that – please see below.



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**NOVENA OF PRAYER IN PREPARATION FOR THE  
GENERAL SYNOD 1<sup>st</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2012**

Following the lead of churches in a number of dioceses, you are invited to use the following scheme as a daily guide to your prayers as we move into the February Synod. Hopefully, church members with different convictions will be united in wanting to pray for generous inclusivity.

**Wednesday 1st February**

*The Preservation of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith  
in the Church of England*

**Thursday 2nd February**

*The House of Bishops*

**Friday 3rd February**

*The House of Clergy*

**Saturday 4th February**

*The House of Laity*

**Sunday 5th February**

*The Catholic Group in Synod*

**Monday 6th February**

*Proper Provision for those unable to accept Women's  
Episcopal Ministry*

**Tuesday 7th February**

*Those Involved in the Debate*

**Wednesday 8th February**

*A Successful Amending Motion*

**Thursday 9th February:**

*The Future of the Church of England*

**A Suggested Daily Prayer**

O God, who care for your people with gentleness and rule them with love, endow with a spirit of wisdom the members of the General Synod charged with making serious decisions concerning your Church. May they be led to know the truth more fully and make such decisions that will help all your people to grow in holiness, unity and peace according to your will. Amen

Our Father .... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

**The 9.30 am Mass on Wednesday 8 February will be specifically  
offered for the General Synod and the passing of a successful  
Amending Motion**

\* \* \* \* \*

**A RICH DIET FOR LENT**

I'VE already read my Lent Book. Got it in Advent; couldn't put it down; read it again; wondered why I'd only just discovered it. Soon after it was written, the author, Joseph Ratzinger, became Benedict XVI. Ah, but this is no pronouncement 'from the Teacher's Chair' (*ex cathedra*): it is a personal quest, in the psalmist's words, to "seek the face of the Lord." All the same, it does raise a smile to find a pope writing "Everyone, then, is free to contradict me."

A.N. Wilson was not wasting words when he said that this Sunday Times Bestseller would "make many jaws drop" It must be the most 'evangelical' book ever written by a pope. Among the vast resources, German, Russian, French, English, on which Benedict draws in 'JESUS OF NAZARETH' it is striking with how much respect he quotes from the Methodist C.K. Barrett and the (formerly called) Congregationalist

C.H. Dodd. There is also a cameo appearance of "the great British writer C.S. Lewis."

Noteworthy is his gentle handling of Jewish scholarship. And we soon see why. He sees the evolution of the great Jewish feasts as moving from Nature/Creation to History/Remembrance and then, above all, to Expectation/Hope. He has, then, a high doctrine of 'the scriptures,' i.e. the Old Testament, as christologically fulfilled in the New, and all within the context of the Community, the Israel of God. But here is no cosy fundamentalism. Not a bit of it. He insists that the tools of historical-critical exegesis not only may be used, but must be, and that this is no threat, but a constant support and illumination. In particular, this approach exposes the shallowness of the 'Jesus of History' brigade, whose reconstructions, far from revealing something formerly hidden, "are more like photographs of their authors and the ideals they hold."

Concerning the Sermon on the Mount, Benedict makes realistic clarifications. The 'Law,' which Christ fulfils in himself as the I AM, does not mean the continuance of Jewish legal prescriptions: this would be to deny the universality of the Gospel (as Paul clearly saw); nor are the Beatitudes some sort of social programme. So he is happy to speak of "the legitimate secularity of the state." But any 'laws'-- historically and culturally contingent as they are -- that tyrannise those he pronounces "Blessed" can have no endorsement from Christians.

So Benedict leads us from John the Baptist to the Transfiguration, with much luminous writing on the Lord's Prayer, Luke's parables and John's imagery. Nowhere is he more penetrating than in his treatment

of that perennially discussed title, *The Son of Man*. He further says he hopes he will live to produce a Part 2 to include the infancy narratives. Can't wait!

In the admirable translation by Adrian J. Walker the few American spellings are not troublesome. The biblical text is RSV, so we are freed from NRSV's sad acrobatics over the word *man* and the pronoun *he*.

Jesus of Nazareth (2007). BLOOMSBURY, [www.bloomsbury.com](http://www.bloomsbury.com)

ISBN 9780747593782 Paperback (2008) £10, but at Walsingham Shrine Shop £9.

*Ken Smith*

### **350th anniversary of the Book of Common Prayer at Christ Church, Broad Street**

The eighteenth-century Christ Church City in Broad Street – believed to stand on the oldest religious site in the City of Bristol – is one of the few churches which still conducts services using the evocative time-honoured language of both the traditional Book of Common Prayer and The King James Bible.

“The popularity of our non-stop round-the-clock reading of the King James Bible to mark its 400th anniversary earlier last year

has inspired us to celebrate this year's special date in the history of the Book of Common Prayer," says the Reverend Richard Hoyal, priest-in-charge at Christ Church City.

"The direct and unambiguous words of the 1662 Prayer Book have been familiar to generations of English-speaking people who have used it for worship, baptisms, marriages and funerals. It is loved for its theology as much as for its wonderful language."

The Prayer Book written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer – who visited the church which stood on the site of Christ Church City in 1534 – contains many phrases which have become familiar parts of everyday speech. Among those in common use are: 'til death us do part'; 'read, mark, learn and inwardly digest'; 'peace in our time' and 'ashes to ashes'. After the Holy Bible, the Book of Common Prayer is the most frequently cited book in the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

The Book of Common Prayer also has inspired musical settings from some of the best-known composers of choral works.

Despite being acknowledged as the standard of doctrine and worship in the Church of England, the Prayer Book has been under threat of being sidelined by contemporary alternatives in recent years – but that could change, believes Father Hoyal.

He says: "In many churches, after 40 years of services conducted in rather flat modern English using duplicated leaflets, worshippers are getting disenchanted with what some have termed 'angel delight.' They yearn for a return to the dignity and language of the Book of Common Prayer they remember from childhood and was used by their parents, grandparents and countless generations before them. This year, with its profile being raised across the country, we could see a revival of the Prayer Book and its use.

“One of the problems is that, all too often, new clergy are completing their ordination training with little or no knowledge of the Book of Common Prayer. Another is that most younger churchgoers and newcomers to the church have barely even heard of it. We hope that the events planned locally and across the country this year will help us change that.”

Events planned in Bristol by Christ Church City this year include:

- ❑ **FEBRUARY:** Fittingly, in the year of Her Majesty the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, Christ Church’s inaugural event to mark the 350th anniversary of the Book of Common Prayer is a fully choral celebration of the prayer book’s official Accession Service. The event takes place at 6 pm on **Monday, February 6**, 60 years to the day when Her Majesty became Queen in 1952. All are most welcome to this important commemoration.
- ❑ **APRIL:** St George’s Day (April 23) will provide another opportunity to mark both a significant national occasion and the Prayer Book anniversary year. A fully choral St George’s-tide celebration of the traditional 1662 Book of Common Prayer order for Holy Communion will take place at 11 am the previous day, **Sunday, April 22**. Among those attending will be representatives of the Royal Society of St George and the Prayer Book Society, among other bodies, and civic figures.
- ❑ **MAY:** The Concordia Choir from Birmingham, under its director Richard Cook, will be at Christ Church on **Wednesday, May 9** to lead an evening Celebration in Words and Music of renowned passages from the Book of Common Prayer. There is much to choose from; over the centuries a huge amount of splendid music has been written for Prayer Book services and individual passages from them.

- ❑ **JUNE:** During the afternoon of **Saturday, June 30**, a re-enactment is planned of the historic procession from Christ Church to St Mary Redcliffe on July 2, 1543, when Cranmer's original Litany in English was sung for the first time. It is this Litany which forms the basis of the one now found in the Book of Common Prayer. The date of June 30 has been selected for the event as it is the nearest weekend to July 2 when the church celebrates the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, believed to have been the reason for the date of the original public procession. The one on June 30 will involve the choirs of both Christ Church City and St Mary Redcliffe. It will culminate in a celebratory act of worship at St Mary Redcliffe which will be celebrating its patronal festival weekend.
  
- ❑ **JUNE:** A major Flower Festival at Christ Church is being planned for June, with a series of arrangements illustrating key Prayer Book themes.

Other events include one which has the support of Bristol Diocesan Board of Education. City schools are being invited to participate in a competitive project to produce pieces of work based on themes from the Book of Common Prayer. A ceremony in the spring will take place to exhibit the work and award prize-winners.

In conjunction with the Prayer Book Society, Christ Church also is keen to promote a major festival anniversary service for the benefit of churches and individuals through the city and the Diocese of Bristol. Discussions are underway to plan lunchtime or evening lectures with prominent speakers on Prayer Book themes later in the year.

- ❑ For more details of the events programme contact the Reverend Richard Hoyal on telephone 0117 9706776 or email him at *richardhoyal@btinternet.co*

For more information about Christ Church City visit:  
[www.christchurchcitybristol.org](http://www.christchurchcitybristol.org)

#### DEVOTION TO OUR LADY

Proper devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary has always been an integral part of our worship at All Saints. The faithful will wish to avail themselves of the many opportunities provided in this part of the country in the coming year.

The Parish Pilgrimage to **Walsingham** will be from 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> October; Garfield Griffiths will provide further details in due course.

The Bristol Catholic Societies annual **Assumptiontide Festival** will take place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> August, and will follow the successful pattern established by Canon Clover in 2000.

Solemn Mass, preceded by the Procession of the image of Our Lady of Glastonbury, will be concelebrated in Bristol Cathedral at noon; the Principal Celebrant and Preacher will be the Rt Revd Robert Ladds SSC, Superior-General of the Society of Mary. After Mass, the Cathedral Refectory will be open, or there is ample picnic space in the Cathedral garden or on College Green.

The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for private prayer and devotion in the Lord Mayor's Chapel from 3.00pm, followed by Solemn Benediction in the Chapel at 3.30pm . There will be appropriate music at both services.

This event has attracted considerable support over the past years, not least from All Saints, and is enthusiastically encouraged by our Parish Priest. There is plenty of room in the Cathedral.

On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September, in our sister parish of All Hallows Easton, the **Nativity of Our Lady** will be celebrated. Concelebrated Festival Mass at noon will be followed by lunch, and at 3.00pm there will be Evensong, Procession and Benediction. Further details will be announced nearer the date.

Those of a more adventurous spirit may wish, on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May, to brave the journey to Tylorstown in the Rhondda Fach, South Wales, for the pilgrimage to the shrine of **Our Lady of Penrhys**. After Mass at the Sports Centre, there will be Prayers and the Liturgy of Healing at the Shrine in the rolling hills of South Wales.

Tylorstown is in the Rhondda Fach, one of the valleys stretching northwards from Cardiff into the former South Wales coalfield.

It is to be hoped that there will be strong representation from All Saints at all these services, and that people from our sister parishes of All Hallows and Christchurch, City, will join us.

All are welcome.

Ave Maria!

*Chris Verity*

## **THE GLASTONBURY PILGRIMAGE**

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

The Pilgrimage will take place on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June in Glastonbury, the “cradle of Christianity” in England.

Full details will be published in the spring, but longstanding supporters will be interested to know that the traditional afternoon Procession of Witness has been restored.

The Bishops of Ebbfleet and Beverley will preach and preside.

All Saints servers will be required in force.

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## **Sermon preached at Solemn Mass, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

CW Gen 14.17-20; Rev 19.6-10; Jn 2.1-11

Blessed are those invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Melchisedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High.

On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee.

It isn't hard, is it, to see how these three readings overlap and illuminate one another. The story of Cana is one of the three great Epiphany manifestations:

“Manifested by the star to the sages from afar;

Manifest at Jordan's stream, Prophet, Priest and King supreme;

And at Cana wedding guest, in thy Godhead manifest;

Manifest in power divine, changing water into wine.”

“This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory.” Nonetheless, it is possible that if we had been there we would have noticed nothing out of the ordinary, barring some whispering among the waiters and then some unexpectedly good wine. The sign was there, but only for those who knew where to look and how to look: Mary, first of all, and then the little group of disciples.

If you compare John's Gospel with Mark's (the one we shall mostly be hearing this year), you feel the difference straight away. Mark is full of incidents, described quickly and immediately going on to the next. In fact the opening chapters are punctuated by "and immediately": and immediately Jesus did this or did that. John's Gospel has relatively few incidents, but each one is told at length and reflected upon. Mark's is the first Gospel, full of anecdotes about Jesus for new disciples who wanted to know what he was like. John's is the last Gospel, with no need to repeat well-known stories, but more concerned to ponder more deeply upon some typical examples, but again to help disciples understand what Jesus was like. "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not." Nevertheless the signs were there. John wants us to see them.

Can it be an accident that at this "first sign", and at the last, when blood and water flowed from the side of Christ, and John is at pains to stress the reliability of his witness, the Mother of Jesus is present? There was a marriage, and the mother of Jesus was there; and when the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." Standing by the cross of Jesus was his mother. In the first sign, water was transformed into abundant wine; in the last, water and blood poured from the side of Christ, his very life poured out for the salvation of the world. "He who saw it has borne witness- his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth- that you also may believe." "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana of Galilee... and his disciples believed in him." Sign and belief are the two poles of revelation: God gives the sign, faith recognises it.

The signs Jesus gave were not intended as knock-down proofs of anything. In Mark, he often tells those he has helped *not* to

say anything about it (but they do). When some Pharisees asked him for a sign, he asked why they could not perceive the signs he had already given. He chided the disciples for being so slow. The implication is surely that you need the right eyes to see, the right ears to hear. You have to be receptive and perceptive to get the point.

Young John saw the signs, old John gave us the fruit of his meditations on them. Water and blood, bread and wine, the symbols that he repeatedly holds before us are sacramental. “My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.” Last Sunday evening, as it happens, the second Lesson at Evensong was the passage from the Letter to the Hebrews in which the author muses on the words “a high priest according to the order of Melchisedek.” Melchisedek, as we heard in our first reading, was the priest-king of Salem, the later Jerusalem. His name (possibly it was in fact his title) means “King of Righteousness”, or “Righteous King,” and he brings gifts of bread and wine. In the account, he has no father named, and no mention of his fate. As a literary figure, he has no beginning or end: no wonder early Christians saw in him a prophetic foreshadowing of Christ; especially as Psalm 110 also refers to the Messianic King as “a priest after the order of Melchisedek.”

The author of the Book of Revelation may or may not be the same John as wrote the Gospel, but his mind works in the same way. At the close of his vision, as he sees the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, he hears an angel crying out, “The marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready: blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper

of the Lamb!” Did he, at that moment or afterwards, remember the simple country wedding at Cana of Galilee, at which Mary was present and the disciples of Jesus were invited? It is easy to get sentimental over weddings, but there are implications in the Scriptural texts both for our understanding of Jesus and our understanding of marriage. The Marriage Service of 1662 gets it right:

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God... to join together this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony, which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man’s innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee.”

The union between Christ and his Church, between Christ and each believing soul, is one of love and fidelity, permanent and unbreakable on his side, intended to be creative and fruitful, however unfaithful and failing in love we may be. It is the marriage of his divinity with our humanity, in which by sharing our weakness he enables us to share his strength, transforming (if we will let him) our watery selves into divine wine. Pope John Paul called marriage “the primordial sacrament”, because it existed before all the others as an effective sign of God’s love for humanity- as the Prayer Book says, “instituted of God in the time of man’s innocency”. In today’s Gospel we see how Christ further adorned it by the first sign of his saving mission, manifesting his glory. May it bring us to believe in him, as did those first disciples. Amen.

*Fr Paul Spilsbury*

## **PARISH RETREAT 2012**

We now have a list of 20 names for our parish Retreat at Abbey House, Glastonbury – 2-4 March. There are still some spaces if anyone else would like to join us. These are always very restful and fruitful weekends.

May I ask those of you who have signed up to let me have your £30 deposit now, please? This will confirm your place on the Retreat. The full cost of the Retreat, including the £30 deposit will be £125.

We should aim to be at Abbey House as soon after 5 pm on 2 March as possible and meet for an Introduction to the weekend at 6 pm. I will be sending out a programme in mid February.

*Liz Badman*