



Affirming Catholicism: Inspiration and Hope in the Anglican Communion

**Affirming Catholicism Newsletter
February 2016**

Almighty God,
by whose grace alone we are accepted
and called to your service:
strengthen us by your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen
(Collect for the Fifth Sunday before Lent)

Almighty God,
who gave to your servant Polycarp
boldness to confess the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ
before the rulers of this world
and courage to die for his faith:
grant that we also may be ready
to give an answer for the faith that is in us
and to suffer gladly for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen
(Collect for Polycarp, 23 February)

Watchword for February 2016 (from the Herrnhuter *Losungen*)

"Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone;
so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."

Mark 11: 25

The biblical "Watchwords" of the Herrnhut Brethren (Moravian Church)
have been published every year since 1731.

Gospel Imprint: "The Worldwide Church"

"... Anglicans seek to live in a global fellowship where we support each other in
God's mission in the place where he has called us to be his People. Mission is
not about 'helping needy people overseas' but helping each other to be

faithful. ... Sometimes the very different cultures from which we come mean that we have different understandings of what God wants us to do. In recent years there have been disagreements about the ministry of women and about human sexuality. But as we face such questions, we need to understand the fundamental truth that our unity, rather than being something we can choose or reject, is a gift from God. In a world which cries out for both material food and the knowledge of God's love, discovering our shared mission should be our priority."

You can find the rest of the leaflet at:

<http://gospelimprint.com/GI-documents/Worldwide%20Church%20-Jul10.pdf>

Please do print it out and make it widely available!

Gospel Imprint is the fresh voice in Anglicanism sharing free resources with all Christians who are seeking to learn, worship and witness to the generosity of the Kingdom of God. It is supported by Affirming Catholicism and the Society of Catholic Priests.

Resources for working with children: the Way of the Cross

Emma Smith writes:

A recent article in the Church Times (19 Feb 2016) suggested that nine out of ten youth workers are now working in Evangelical churches. For those of us who treasure the richness of the Catholic tradition, whether clergy, employed children's workers, volunteers, teachers, parents or carers, we are reminded of the importance of passing on our Catholic liturgy and spirituality to the children in our care even from a very early age.

It is never hard to think of celebrating Easter Day with people of all ages, but as we move towards Holy Week, and Good Friday in particular, many parents balk at the idea of explaining a story of such violence to their innocent toddlers and children, and a good number of these turn to their clergy and children's leaders for help. Timothy Radcliffe (2015) has described the Stations of the Cross as: "a beautiful expression of the core of our faith: that Jesus embraced the dramas of every human life, our triumphs and failures, our joys and sorrows." They also offer a wonderful resource for reflecting on the story of Christ's death on the Cross, and for engaging with the many themes which even young children will have encountered, of being sad, alone, in pain, bullied, let down by our friends, loved, encouraged and helped. There are a number of different resources available for walking the Stations of the Cross with children. Many Catholic churches will have their own Stations of the Cross, and it may be appropriate to use these in a Good Friday meditation with children. However, sometimes these are too gory, too stylised or simply too high up on the walls to be accessible for children – and people may feel that the full fourteen stations would demand too much of little attention spans.

McCrimmons (www.mccrimmons.com) provide a number of different options for different age-groups. I have regularly used the Sisters of Turvey Abbey's full set of Catholic Stations and a Resurrection image, all in dramatic colours contrasting light and darkness, and full of imagery and symbol. A book, set of posters and a DVD are all available, and they are particularly effective with slightly older children, perhaps

Keystage 2 and above. The Sisters have also created a poster set called, "Jesus – our Way", which covers the story of Holy Week, from the Entry into Jerusalem through to the Resurrection, and provides an excellent way of telling the story in Holy Week itself.

Meanwhile for younger children, McCrimmons also offer a set of ten posters and a book called, *A Way of the Cross for Children*, by Rachel Mabey. These are rather gentler and more sanitised images in pastel shades, which can be stuck onto the ends of pews or low down on the walls to allow even the smallest children or most anxious parents to look at and consider them. The book gives a short, easy-to-understand reading and a prayer for each of its ten stations, or one can just ask the children about what they see and feel. One year I asked the children as we looked at the poster, "Jesus on the Cross", how they thought Jesus might be feeling. A little boy responded solemnly: "I think Jesus is feeling worse, and worse, and WORSE." (cf. Matthew 27:46)

Margaret Pritchard Houston suggests a Good Friday liturgy with just four stations, interspersed with songs, poems and prayer, together with a simplified version of the Reproaches, while for home reading with children, one might also use *The Story of the Cross* – the stations retold with suggestions for prayer and child-friendly illustrations, to bring to the next generation this most powerful way of celebrating the story at the heart of our faith.

Mary Joslin, *The Story of the Cross* (Loyola Press 2002).

Rachel Mabey, *A Way of the Cross for Children* (McCrimmons Publishing Co 2012).

Margaret Pritchard Houston, *There is a Season* (SPCK 2013).

The Benedictine Sisters of Turvey Abbey, *The Footsteps of Christ, Journey to the Cross and Beyond* (McCrimmons Publishing Co 1996/2006).

General Synod – February 2016

Columba Declaration: The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland addressed the General Synod on the Columba Declaration:

The Declaration will, I believe, if approved by this Synod and by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, symbolise and give expression to a relationship which has grown and developed in recent years and which, in the providence of God, may yet deepen more fully to our mutual, but not exclusive, benefit. The strengthening of the bonds that already exist between us can only serve the 'advance of the Gospel' which is our united desire and aim. ...

The Report before General Synod today and, I trust, the General Assembly in May, gives us the opportunity to do so.

The Report proposes nothing ground-breaking, but what it does do is to remind, recall and to reaffirm what we already do together in partnership and in concert with one another as 'national churches'; as churches within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of which we are both part, and in virtue of which we are related to one another, and related to other churches within our particular communions and beyond.

In seeking to establish and further any relationship there are, of course, challenges along the way. The course of true partnership never runs entirely smoothly! I am aware that there have been some misunderstandings of what this Report is about, partly because of the way that it attracted national press coverage just before

Christmas before we were ready to release the full text, and that those misunderstandings have resulted in some hurt and dismay on the part of the Scottish Episcopal Church in particular.

We have been working hard since then to address those misunderstandings and to focus on how responding to the Report can be a positive opportunity for building relations with the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of England. [The Scottish Episcopal Church's press release on 29th January](#) confirms their recognition of these positive developments and sets out a constructive way forward, with a timetable set for their formal response to this Report following its debate today and at the Assembly in May.

Thus, Bishop Gregor Duncan, Acting Convener of the Faith & Order Board of the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church, stated:

'The Board believes that publication of Growth in Communion-Partnership in Mission now provides an opportunity to build on the warm relations which the Scottish Episcopal Church already enjoys with the Church of Scotland and very much looks forward to continuing discussions.'

That this Synod,

- (a) welcome the report of the Joint Study Group of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland (annexed to GS 2016) as a significant development in the relationship between the two churches;
- (b) approve the Columba Declaration, consisting of mutual Acknowledgements and Commitments, as set out in paragraph 39 of the report;
- (c) request the Council for Christian Unity to oversee the implementation of the Commitments contained in the Columba Declaration and set up the Contact Group proposed by it; and
- (d) grateful for the Church of England's valued relationship with the Scottish Episcopal Church within the Anglican Communion, request the Council for Christian Unity to ensure that the Scottish Episcopal Church is invited to appoint a representative to attend meetings of the Contact Group.

The whole address can be found here:

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/recent/moderators_address_to_the_general_synod_of_the_church_of_england.

Resourcing ministerial education

The Resourcing Ministerial Education proposals received a strong boost when Synod voted in favour of a motion proposed by Steven Croft, Bishop of Sheffield, as chair of the Ministry Council. Two amendments accepted by the proposer were approved by Synod, two more critical amendments were clearly lost. The debate was a good example however of how the content of speeches, and the reception given to them by Synod members, can be as important as the voting figures. The detailed implementation work will be informed by issues raised about the place and funding of residential training, the balance of decision making between bishops, training institutions and individual candidates, and the linkage between the pre and post ordination phases of initial ministerial training.

That this Synod:

- (a) reaffirm the five objectives set out in GS 1979 for achieving the vision of a growing church with a flourishing ministry;

(b) note that work on Resourcing Ministerial Education and on enhancing quality in all stages of ministerial development, set out in GS 2020, contributes to these objectives;

(c) welcome the proposed new funding arrangements for initial ministerial education, agreed by the Archbishops' Council following wide consultation, set out in GS 2020 and, recognising the vital contribution of TEIs and the importance of their full involvement in developing with dioceses a shared understanding of ministry and ministerial education and in implementing as set out in Annex F of GS 2020 the funding arrangements, request the Archbishops' Council to report to the Synod by July 2017 on progress towards achieving these objectives; and

(d) request the Archbishops' Council to report back to the Synod by July 2018 on the progress being made to secure both a step change in the number of ordinands and continuing improvement in their quality and deployability.

(e) request the Archbishops' Council to report back to the Synod by July 2018 on the progress made by dioceses to secure a step change in both the number and variety of authorised lay ministries.

Impact of sanctions on benefit claimants (GS 2019A and GS 2019B) –

There was an excellent debate on a Diocesan Synod Motion brought by Leeds (West Yorks and Dales) concerning the impact of sanctions on benefit claimants. A number of speakers from a wide range of dioceses spoke about matters of justice and of what it means to live in a fair and compassionate society. These contributions were informed by deep engagement of parish churches in some of the most deprived areas of the nation. It was welcome outward focus, reflecting the real value of the parish system, and both the proclamation of the social gospel and the calling of the church to prophetic witness.

Canon Kathryn Fitzsimons proposed the motion, offering a reflection on the real misery caused by benefit sanctions, and commenting: "There seems to be real questions as to whether the punishment fits the crime. For most of us the thought of being punished by the loss of four weeks' pay for being half an hour later for work as a first offence would be a bizarre one." Elliot Swatridge, youth representative on the synod, reminded synod: "If we do not side with the poor and needy then we cannot claim in any sense to follow Jesus."

The motion was carried:

That this Synod:

(a) welcome the extensive work already undertaken by the Church of England in partnership with others to evaluate the impact of benefits sanctioning and to identify and promote recommendations for the reform of sanctions policy and practice;

(b) call on Her Majesty's Government to implement the recommendations numbered 58-63 inclusive, made in December 2014 by the All Party Parliamentary Inquiry Report into Hunger in the UK Feeding Britain in respect of the use of sanctions upon benefit claimants;

(c) call on Her Majesty's Government to initiate a full independent review of the impact and efficacy of the sanctions and conditionality regime; and

(d) encourage every part of the Church of England to offer practical and pastoral support to those experiencing benefit sanctions, building on the Church's work with food banks, credit unions and debt advice.

A report by Ruth Gledhill can be found here:

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.that.does.not.side.with.the.poor.cannot.claim.to.follow.jesus.synod.told/79975.htm>.

Forthcoming events which might be of interest:

THE HEART IN PILGRIMAGE: A series of lunchtime addresses exploring prayer and imagination, by Canon Jeremy Davies, 1:05 p.m., Thursdays in Lent, St Matthew's Westminster (<http://www.stmw.org/>)

Thursday February 25th

Finding the Words for Prayer: Praying through liturgy, poetry and prose

Thursday March 3rd

Hearing the Music: How music transcends our words and transforms our prayer

Thursday March 10th

Image and Imagination: From Milk Maid to Walking Madonna – praying with pictures

Thursday March 17th

The Sound of Silence: Moving beyond words, images and music to the depths of imagination

THE REFUGEE TALES 2016

A walk in solidarity with refugees and detainees from Canterbury to Southwark, 3 – 8 July.

Inspired by Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, around sixty pilgrims will leave Canterbury on 4 July, walking north to Faversham and Gravesend and then along the Thames Path into Central London, calling for the practice of indefinite immigration detention in the UK to end. The project will create a space in which the language of welcome is the prevailing discourse. Every evening of the walk, contemporary writers will read tales written in collaboration with former detainees. These events are free with guest hosts and musicians. The evening events are at Faversham, Gravesend, Dartford and Greenwich. On the last night there is a ticketed event at the ICA on the Mall.

Refugee Tales opens on 3 July with a Forum at the University of Kent, 'Being Detained Indefinitely: A Day of Thought, Performance and Action'. The purpose of the Forum is to communicate the facts and experience of immigration detention in the UK, while setting the policy in a wider human context and making the case for an end to indefinite detention. Confirmed speakers include Ali Smith, Shami Chakrabarti, Marina Warner, David Herd, Mary Bosworth and Abdulrazak Gurnah. Booking for the Forum and walk tickets for Refugee Tales is now open. If you would like to attend our opening Forum, or walk with us for a single day or the full five days see: www.refugeetales.org. There is a short film of the walk last year, which gives a flavour of the project: <https://vimeo.com/154166590>.

We are very grateful to support from Bishop Jonathan Clark and The Reverend Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett of Southwark Diocese.

Support for diocesan events:

Would you like to organise an event locally but can't afford to bring a speaker in? Affirming Catholicism can offer grants of up to £500 to help fund your event. Expressions of interest to the Board at administrator@affirmingcatholicism.org.uk.

Donations and gift aid

We welcome donations to support the work of Affirming Catholicism. You can send a cheque to Mark Perrett, Affirming Catholicism, 114 Hamilton Terrace, Maida Vale, LONDON NW8 9UT, or make an online donation by registering here: <http://www.affirmingcatholicism.org.uk/donate.html>

Have you renewed your gift aid declaration? Many of our supporters made gift aid declarations under the old rules, and these declarations have now run out. If you have not renewed yours, or are not sure, please complete <https://form.jotformeu.com/53301712150338>

If you would like to make a donation and have it Gift Aided (Affirming Catholicism can reclaim 25p on every £1 donated increasing the value of your donation by a quarter at no extra cost to you) please complete the following declaration and return it with your donation to Affirming Catholicism:

Please notify Affirming Catholicism if you *want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income/capital gains.*

If you pay income tax at the higher rate or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

We hope you enjoy Affirming Catholicism's newsletter.

Do tell us what you think, and let us know of forthcoming events that you would like publicised by writing to: newsletters@affirmingcatholicism.org.uk.

If you are a diocesan coordinator, please pass the newsletter on to your members and supporters, or let us have their emails so that we can send it to them directly.

If you have received this because someone has forwarded it to you, please consider becoming a supporter yourself. It's easy to do this on our website www.affirmingcatholicism.org.uk. In doing this, you will receive regular news and updates including the Annual Review; your financial contribution will help us to do more and to do it even better; and you will be one more voice calling for a generous and open Catholic future for the Church of England and the Anglican Communion.

If you would like to know more about what Affirming Catholicism does, look at our **Annual Review** which is available here:

http://www.affirmingcatholicism.org.uk/Downloads/annual_review_downloads/Aff_Cath_2015_Annual_Review.pdf



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