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## Forward in Christ

*The magazine of Forward in Faith North America.*

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With every blessing,

The Rev. Canon Lawrence D. Bausch, President, Forward in Faith North America.

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# In the News

**UK Refuses Visas to Persecuted Christians:** The UK has refused short term visas to three persecuted bishops from Iraq and Syria. The Archbishop of Mosul, the Archbishop of Homs and the Archbishop of St Matthew's Valley (Nineveh Valley) were all refused short term entry visas, despite two of the bishops being invited to the consecration of a new Syrian Orthodox cathedral in London.

According to the Barnabas Fund, visas were refused on the grounds that the Archbishops did not have sufficient funds to support themselves and might not return to their countries of origin. The leader of the UK's Syriac Orthodox Christians, Archbishop Athanasius Thoma Dawod, condemned the decision: "We cannot understand why Britain is treating Christians in this way?"

The treatment of these persecuted Christians contrasts strongly with that given to extremist Islamic leaders. This summer two Pakistani Imams were given visas to tour UK mosques. They were both prominent supporters of Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws and advocates of the killing of Christians accused of under them.

**Parishioners Padlock Bishop:** Hostilities between parishioners and the Bishop of Sapele, the Rt. Rev. Erifeta, became so bad that angry congregants padlocked the bishop in his Cathedral Church of St. Luke. According to reports, the besieged bishop had to break out of the cathedral through its gate.

The dispute arose in 2015, over alleged diocesan corruption and "high handedness," and has yet to be resolved despite attempts at reconciliation.

*Forward in Christ* has to ask if this presents the wider Communion with a model for ecclesial discipline?

**Australian Church Sex Scandal:** The Anglican Church in Australia has been rocked by a series of child sex scandals, involving clergy in Perth, Newcastle and Tasmania.

The alleged abuse was particularly far-ranging in Tasmania, involving a paedophile ring active within the Church of England Boy's Society (CEBS). According to evidence presented to a Royal Commission earlier this year, CEBS official Bob Brandenburg colluded with Lou Daniels, a Burnie Archdeacon, to sexually molest young boys. Brandenburg committed suicide in 1999 after being charged with nearly 400 child abuse offences. Daniels was not alone, at least two other Tasmanian priests were heavily involved in the child sex ring, Garth Hawkins and John Elliott. The latter was convicted of 30 sex crimes against minors. The former Bishop of Tasmania, Philip Newall, has been accused of covering up the abuse.

In Perth, a former Anglican priest, Raymond Cheek, was found guilty of child abuse over a 30 year period, between 1955 and 1985, during which time he molested 5 boys. The former Dean of Newcastle, Graeme Lawrence, was also implicated in the scandal. However, Lawrence denied he led a paedophile sex ring, but was only guilty of "failing to

act" when he suspected a priest was sexually abusing boys. Lawrence has been accused of child abuse dating from the time when he was Rector of Griffith. He was defrocked in 2012.

**No Creed in Brisbane:** The Primate of Australia, Phillip Aspinall, has made Archdeacon Jeremy Greaves an Assistant Bishop. Greaves is controversial for enthusiastically supporting gay marriage and, most recently, for saying that he was willing to "abandon the creed."

As reported by Australian priest, David Ould, Greaves was questioned about his beliefs by ABC Radio National interviewer, Rachel Kohn:

*Rachael Kohn: Do you specifically then have difficulties with the Apostles' Creed that you might like to rewrite it or ditch it?*

*Jeremy Greaves: I'd be happy to abandon the Creed.*

Greaves went on to say that abandoning traditional Christian terms and doctrine was problematic because it might offend congregations and have an impact on his salary.

"I feel very conflicted about some of those things," stated Greaves, "Because – and she talked about that chasm between what so many of us believe and what we feel we have permission to say in our churches. And for so many of us in ministry, we're locked into a model where the people who sit in the pews pay our salaries, pay our way. I have a wife and three small children to support and so the challenge of being too prophetic and changing too many things too quickly is that there won't be enough people left in the short term to help me survive financially, and that's a brutal and very difficult challenge."

Perhaps now that Greaves is a bishop he won't have to worry about that kind of financial shortfall, or the Creed.

**St. Asaph's Cathedral Goes Gay:** St. Asaph's Cathedral in Wales premiered the short LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual) film, *All One in Christ*, on December 6, as part of the Iris Prize gay film festival, also taking place at the cathedral.

The Iris Prize is the world's most prestigious LGBTQIA short film award and the Archbishop of Wales, Barry Morgan, was enthusiastic about it:

"This film will not be easy watching for church members as it reminds us how people among us have been ostracised and mistreated because of their sexuality. By sharing the personal stories of those who have suffered and been hurt I hope this powerful film will bring home to all the scale of the damage done and ultimately help change attitudes within the church."

Mike Jones from Changing Attitude, Trawsnewid Agwedd Cymru, said, "Those who took part in the film describe the pain experienced by LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual) people... We are all one in Christ."

Archbishop Barry Morgan was against gay marriage until he decided earlier this year that it was "biblical." Morgan is set to retire in 2017.



# Go East

## *Fr. Lawrence Bausch recommends Ad Orientem*

In the November issue of *Forward in Christ*, Fr. John Hines contributed a fine article on the value of celebrating the Eucharist in the traditional *Ad Orientem* (eastward facing) position. As a priest who has been blessed to celebrate this way for the last 40 years, I am gratified to see a renewed appreciation of this our predominant tradition. Fr. Hines described the spiritual value this has during the Mass itself. I would like to explore some of the pastoral benefits for priest and people which flow from the practice, and which may be useful for meditation for those whose parish setting does not offer this opportunity.

In a recent event in my Diocese, our Bishop, Keith Andrews, offered the opinion that “in the West, Christians tend to focus on activities rather than on orientation.” While the context for these words was to introduce a speaker who would address clergy on the subject of “Leading a Disciple-Making Church”, I couldn’t help thinking about this in a liturgical context: Does the priest’s “orientation” in the Mass have a connection with the question of focus in our Christian life and ministry? Fr. Hines wrote, “When the priest faces the people, there is a tendency for the people to focus on his actions rather than on the act... If, on the other hand, the priest is facing in the same direction as the people it turns the focus on the act that God is doing rather than the priest.”

What emerged from my reflections on this issue may be summarized as follows:

1. Man was made for worship – to offer the whole self and everything we are and have to God in gratitude and love.
2. The Eucharist is the central act of Christian worship – It is “perfect worship” because it is the Son’s complete self-offering to the Father, into which He invites us and enables us to participate.
3. Therefore, the Eucharist is the primary “orientation” of the Christian, whether lay or ordained.
4. For the priest whose liturgical practice is to face East, this position becomes the foundation and prevailing symbol for all ministry. The distribution of the Elements follows from the attention to God’s definitive actions on our behalf.
5. All priestly ministry involves leading people to God and then facilitating their encounter with God through presenting Him to them.



6. For the laity, the act of being eastward-facing for the miracle of Consecration properly anchors them in the primacy of God’s actions (grace) to unite us with Him.

7. From this, lay persons too can base their Christian lives, their witness and ministry, on this orientation. They too are called and empowered to lead others to Christ.

Finally, I have often fancied that the role of the priest in worship and ministry, and the role of the Christian in the world, is to be like a host at a party. We are to insure that everyone gets the opportunity to meet the “Guest of Honor” – and then to turn towards Him who is indeed the true Host.

May we find that our proper orientation is towards God and His actions, and may our activities as His disciples assist in orienting others towards Him.



*Fr. Lawrence Bausch is President of Forward in Faith North America (FIFNA) and Rector of Holy Trinity, Ocean Beach, San Diego, California.*

### *A Christmas Prayer*

*O sweet Child of Bethlehem, grant that we may share with all our hearts  
in this profound mystery of Christmas. Put into the hearts of men and women this peace  
for which they sometimes seek so desperately and which you alone can give to them.  
Help them to know one another better, and to live as brothers and sisters,  
children of the same Father. Reveal to them also your beauty, holiness and purity.  
Awaken in their hearts love and gratitude for your infinite goodness.  
Join them all together in your love. And give us your heavenly peace. Amen.*

*Pope John XXIII*

# A Christmas Homily

*By Bishop Jack Iker*

*"Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." (St. Luke 2:15)*

It is Christmas, and once again and these words of the shepherds have become our own. We too journey with them to Bethlehem to celebrate the birth of Jesus once again. Bethlehem is a real place, not some imaginary village. Pilgrims can still visit the holy site today where Jesus was born.

But tonight at Christmas, as every year, Christians around the world make a spiritual pilgrimage, in Scripture, song, and prayer, and we too go to Bethlehem to worship the newborn King. Tonight this church becomes our Bethlehem – the place where God in Christ comes among us once again. Like the shepherds, let us worship and adore him. We have been drawn here, like the shepherds, by the message of the angels – the "good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (St. Luke 2:10-11)

No matter how many times we make this Christmas pilgrimage, there is always a joyful and wondrous sense about it. The air is filled with joy and magic on Christmas Eve as at no other time of the year. How do we put into words what Christmas means to us? From one year to the next, the meaning of Christmas may change for us as our life changes. The meaning is not the same for a child as for an adult. It is different for an adolescent and a senior citizen. We bring a slightly different perspective each time.

So for some of us this is a happy and joyful Christmas. For others, it is a sad and difficult time. For example, for those of us with family or loved ones serving in the armed forces, Christmas brings a special hope for peace on earth and good will towards all people. For some, this Christmas means the absence of a loved one who has died in the past year, and so there is a degree of sadness and loss. For others again, this Christmas is their first together as a newly married couple or as first time



parents, and all the special joys that family and children bring at this time of the year. And so on.

But one thing remains the same, no matter how many times we make our Christmas pilgrimage to Bethlehem: we always find Jesus has come to us as Emmanuel – God with us. We always find that love and peace of God which He gives us in the gift of His only Son. No matter what circumstances in our lives may seek to dampen or darken the light and the joy of this season, we always find renewed hope and encouragement in the birthday of our Savior.

In him, we have the promise of God's forgiveness and love, God's grace and deliverance – the gift of new and eternal life in Jesus, who saves us from sin and death.

Yes, the one whose birth we celebrate tonight has lived and died and rose again for us! This is our confidence and our strength. Jesus is our joy, our hope, and our peace. He alone can save us and deliver us from hopelessness and despair. Come to the altar tonight to worship and adore him. Receive him into your heart with joy.

"O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;

cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;

O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel."

*Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)*

I wish you all a very merry and joyous Christmas!



*The Rt. Rev. Jack Iker is the Bishop of Fort Worth, Texas.*



# Reverent Silence

By Fr. Will Brown

*"Today a great silence reigns on earth, a great silence and a great stillness. A great silence because the King is asleep."*

So wrote an anonymous priest in the early centuries of the Church. "Today a great silence reigns on earth, a great silence and a great stillness. A great silence because the King is asleep." He wrote this for a sermon preached on Holy Saturday, the day when Jesus lay dead in the tomb, but it may be said equally appropriately of our Lord's birth in the flesh.

The great central mystery of our faith, the Incarnation of the Word, can perhaps best be approached, best contemplated, not in many words, but in an image, the image of the babe lying in the manger. The King is asleep. And we gaze with reverent silence.

So many of the mysteries of our faith are fittingly accompanied by silence. For nine months the Lord rested silently in the womb of his Virgin Mother. On that first Christmas he lies silent in the straw – the King, who has come to save us, is resting. In thirty-three years there will again be much silence: silence before the council, before Pilate and Caiaphas and Herod; an anguished cry from the cross, receding into silence; the dead Christ, silent in the tomb.

From the womb to the tomb, there is much reverent silence. And this silence is the most suitable response to what has come to pass: The Word has become flesh, that he might dwell among us. Commenting on this sentence of St. John's Gospel, Blessed John Henry Newman said:

"Thus does the favoured Apostle and Evangelist [St. John] announce to us that Sacred Mystery, which we this day especially commemorate, the incarnation of the Eternal Word. Thus briefly and simply does he speak as if fearing he should fail in fitting reverence. If any there was who might seem to have permission to indulge in words on this subject, it was the beloved disciple, who had heard and seen, and looked upon, and handled the Word of Life; yet, in proportion to the height of his privilege, was his discernment of the infinite distance between him and his Creator. Such too was the temper of the Holy Angels, when the Father 'brought in the First-begotten into the world': they straightway worshipped Him. And such was the feelings of awe and love mingled together, which remained for a while in the church after Angels had announced his coming, and Evangelists had recorded His sojourn here, and His departure; 'there was silence as it were for half an hour.' Around the Church, indeed, the voices of blasphemy were heard, even as when he hung on the cross; but in the Church there was light and peace, fear, joy, and holy meditation. Lawless doubtings, importunate inquiries, confident reasonings were not. [A] heartfelt adoration, a practical devotion to the Ever-blessed Son, precluded difficulties in faith, and sheltered the Church from the necessity of speaking."

This certainly is a part of the Christmas message, this injunction to reverent silence, it is in a sense our newborn King's first mandate. Asleep on the hay, it is the incarnate Word's first word, calling us to adore him. *Venite adoremus*,



O come let us adore. St. Luke says:

The shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. (Luke 2.15ff)

Coming with the shepherds to this mystical crèche, joining Mary and Joseph in holy meditation, and seeing this child in the straw – what do we see? St. Maximus the Confessor said that we see the holy child playing at the boundary of earth and heaven, of infinity and finitude. Standing at the crèche, seeing "this thing that has happened", we see God's victory, and our salvation, what the devil and the rulers of this world's present darkness could never have expected – the infinite having become a finite fact – the foolishness and weakness of the eternal God, dwelling beyond the limit of grammar but having become intelligible; dwelling beyond the building blocks of logic, language, and math, but now having become a discreet reality, wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.

In his great poem Ash Wednesday, T.S. Eliot wrote:

If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent  
If the unheard, unspoken  
Word is unspoken, unheard;  
Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,

The Word without a word, the Word within  
the world and for the world;  
And the light shone in darkness and  
Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled  
About the centre of the silent Word.

And the speaker in the poem asks, “Where shall the word be found, where will the word Resound?” And he concludes: “Not here, there is not enough silence...” and adds, “No place of grace for those who avoid the face/No time to rejoice for those who walk among noise and deny/the voice.”

What then do we do? How then shall we live? At the end of his life on earth, as Jesus hangs on the cross, and once again God’s foolishness and weakness are on display, St. Luke says that Jesus’ “acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance and saw these things,” (Luke 23.49). So here at the beginning of his earthly life, after they have seen “this thing that has happened” (Luke 2.15), the shepherds glorify and praise God for all that they have heard and seen (Luke 2.20). But best of all, “Mary kept

all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Luke 2.19).

Christmas is a frenetic time in our culture. It’s full of activity and noise. “Against the Word, the unstilled world still whirls.” Christians may be grateful that the world’s calendar does not coincide with the Church’s in this instance. According to the Church, Christmas begins tonight and lasts until the feast of the Epiphany, on January 6. As the unstilled world comes down from its Happy Holidays frenzy, be still, and come with the eyes of your spirit to see this thing that has happened - a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Be silent, both outwardly and inwardly, so that you can hear the unspoken, eternal Word of God, now made flesh, and come to dwell among us.



*Fr. Will Brown is Rector of Holy Cross, in the Diocese of Dallas.*

## An Advent Letter

### *From GAFCON*

To the Faithful of the GAFCON movement and friends from Archbishop Nicholas Okoh, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria and Chairman, the GAFCON Primates Council.

My dear people of God,

As the season of Advent begins, I am calling on all of us who belong to the GAFCON movement to make this a time when we focus our prayer and our giving on the great work God has called us to do.

At the heart of our mission is the task of restoring the Bible to its rightful place at the centre of the Anglican Communion and if we really believe its message, then everything we do will be shaped by the promise of Christ’s glorious, personal and universal return as Saviour, Judge and Lord. In an uncertain world, this is certain. The election of an outsider as the next President in the United States and the upheaval of the UK’s vote to leave the European Union earlier this year remind us of the uncertainty of human rule and the urgency of proclaiming God’s rule and kingdom.

So we must be ready and prepared, understanding the times, just as the Apostle Paul urges the Christians in Rome when he writes: ‘the hour has come for you to wake out of sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed’ (Romans 13:11).

At this critical point in the life of the Communion, we need your full support. Will it return to the ancient paths or sleepwalk into fatal compromise? By the grace of God, GAFCON is a movement of spiritual awakening in a Communion standing at the crossroads.

I am greatly encouraged by what has already been achieved. GAFCON pioneers new structures where old ones have failed, we are recognised as the leading voice for orthodoxy in the Communion, we are equipping key leaders, in the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration we have given the



Communion a contemporary standard of historic Anglican confession and every five years the Anglican Communion has a taste of what it can become as faithful Anglicans gather in growing numbers from around the world in worship and fellowship around God’s Word.

But what especially encourages me about GAFCON is



the recovery of gospel courage and enterprise. Much of the Anglican Communion owes its existence to missionary pioneers who were ready to lay down their lives because they were confident in the promises of God, however difficult their circumstances. Now, the same courage is needed to guard that legacy and re-evangelise the increasingly secular West. Let me share just two examples.

Firstly, I thank God that Archbishop Greg Venables will be re-joining the GAFCON Primates Council now that he has been elected to serve again as the Primate of the Anglican Province of South America in succession to our greatly esteemed colleague Presiding Bishop Tito Zavala. His ministry demonstrates that courage which is so central to the GAFCON story. In his previous term as Primate, despite much opposition, Archbishop Venables bravely supported orthodox Anglicans in North America and stood with the Diocese of Recife in Brazil after it had to withdraw from the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil.


We are now seeing similar courage in England as GAFCON UK, led by Canon Andy Lines, endures hostility simply for speaking the truth about the increasing breakdown of church discipline in the Church of England. There are now clergy and bishops who openly take pride in their rejection of biblical preaching and have even launched a website to encourage the violation of the 1998 Lambeth Conference Resolution I.10 on human sexuality.

But more disturbing is the response of the Church of England at its highest level. The Secretary of the Archbishops' Council has written an open letter to Canon Lines in which he describes the Lambeth resolution as merely 'an important document in the history of the Anglican Communion'. But this is no ordinary resolution. It has been the standard appealed to again and again in Communion affairs and most recently in the Communiqué from the Sixth Global South Conference in Cairo which describes it as representing the 'clear teaching of Scripture'.

God has greatly blessed GAFCON, but there is much yet to do. My vision is for ordinary Anglicans in every continent to be fully alert and committed to this movement of the Holy Spirit to restore our Communion. So please visit the GAFCON website where you will find much to give thanks for and much to pray for. And please help boost our finances. You can donate online, either a one-off gift or regular donation, .

My brothers and sisters, may we long for our Lord's appearing and let us pray and let us give as those who will one day stand before him in the full splendour of his majesty and power.

The Most Revd Nicholas D. Okoh

Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria and Chairman, the GAFCON Primates Council. 

## The Crèche, The Cross, and Mary

*By Fr. Terence Jordan*

From the Prologue of the Gospel of St. John, vs. 1-4, 14: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father."

Anglo-Catholics, in particular, and Anglicans, in general, are often chided by their critics for what they perceive as an over-emphasis on the Doctrine of the Incarnation, to the detriment of the more central, saving act of the Atonement, the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.

It's true, of course, that catholic-minded Christians do love to go on and on about the Incarnation, and its immense implications: matter matters; material things are good, and not intrinsically evil; water, bread and wine, and oil, in and beyond themselves, convey a meaning that hints at divinity.

As St. John reminds us in his Prologue, using some of the most exalted prose in the New Testament, "The Word became flesh."

Our Christian faith helps us hold together things which often get separated: faith and practice; word and sacrament; law and mercy; work and rest; giving and receiving. And so it is with Incarnation and Atonement. They both reflect the same Divine Plan, and are inextricable. The Atonement presents the saving "work" of Christ, breaking down the barrier

of enmity between the righteous God and a sinful humanity by His passion and sacrificial death on the Cross, bringing salvation to the world. But who is this Christ doing this work? That is the question the Incarnation answers. The Incarnation shows us who He is.

At a moment in time, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, God the Son, took flesh of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and was made Man. St. Luke recounts this in Chapter 1 of his Gospel. The Angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will conceive a child by the Holy Spirit, and call him Jesus. And Mary said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your Word."

Catholic-minded Christians are often criticized for their devotion to Mary. They are told this diminishes the proper attention that should be paid to Jesus. But again, both are necessary and should be held together. Devotion to Mary leads to worship of her son, Jesus. When Mary said "Yes" to the Angel Gabriel, she was a "type" of all humanity, in receiving what God wants to give, His Grace. And after receiving Him, she shared Him with the world. Because of her willingness to be a part of the drama of redemption, the Fathers, at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., declared her the *Theotokos*, the God-bearer, sheltering in her womb, Jesus, both God and Man; one divine person with two natures, divine and human.

In reflecting on the Annunciation, St. Thomas Aquinas writes, "The angel's reverent salutation of Mary is a complete reversal of roles from the Old Testament, in which men



revered angels. Such reverence was due to angels because they have a spiritual and incorruptible nature, are more familiar with God, and partake most fully of the divine light." In revering Mary, then, the Angel Gabriel is showing she surpasses the angels in these three aspects. Only someone "full of Grace" could merit such extraordinary reverence.

So, for nine months, the Blessed Virgin Mary harbored divinity within herself, a living "ark of the New Covenant" bearing the "holy of holies" but not consumed by the divine fire; a living tabernacle containing the "Real Presence." We know that when a mother gives birth, some of her baby's cells remain in her body for the rest of her life. So even after the Nativity of Jesus, Mary continued to harbor divinity within her body. This is why Mary matters, and is honored.

Mary helps us in understanding who her son Jesus is. She is the closest human being to Him. She was present at His birth, throughout His life, and she stood at the foot of the cross and was with Him in His death. Through her, we and all humanity are united in that reality, the saving drama of redemption, which holds together both Crèche and Cross.



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## Saxon Churches

*By George Hillard*

When considering a church it is generally easy to tell that it is a church because it has specific architectural features. These are usually size, proportions of the nave, arches and doorways, windows, and towers. Inside, there are pillars supporting the roof, and arches connecting these columns, forming what is called an arcade. When looking at historic churches, their architecture usually runs from the simple to the complex. Thus, the early Saxon churches, which date from about 650, are usually small and simple. Their basic shape was a rectangle (single celled church) or a rectangle with an additional chamber (two-celled) at one end.

One such survivor is St. John's Church in Escomb, County Durham. It was built between 670 and 690 in the North, close to Hadrian's Wall and not far from several other churches built about the same time. St. John's has a very tall and narrow nave and very small rectangular chancel where the altar is placed. Roman stones were used and can be identified by, in this case, an engraving identifying a Roman Army unit: the Sixth Legion (LEG VI). It is now just the rectangle plus the chancel and entrance porch, but it had two other chambers at some time in its early history. Studying these old buildings is interesting, as traces (indentations, changes in materials) of these other chambers are visible. Escomb is famous among Saxon churches because it gave birth to a now well-known architectural feature: the stones in the jambs of the arch are laid in an alternating horizontal and vertical fashion: Escomb style.

The chancel arch is very well fashioned, tall and narrow, typical of the early arches (in general) though some early Roman arches were much larger. Nearby St. Andrew's in



*St. John's, Escomb*

Corbridge, close to Hadrian's wall, has a large (16' tall and 8' wide) Roman arch taken from a nearby Roman complex. These stones may date to the second century, though they were not placed into the church until perhaps the 7th or 8th century. This arch possibly served as an entry gate; they have scratchings in the surface which are possibly from wagon axles.





*Doorway at St. Mary's, Stow*

Not far away are two very early monastic churches: St Paul's (Jarrow) and St. Peter's (Monkwearmouth). The surviving parts of St. Peter's (consecrated 674 AD) show the general shape of an early Saxon church: tower plus tall, narrow wall, the west wall of the nave. The tower grew in height over the years; initially, it was shorter, as can be seen in the photograph. Parts of St. Paul's are still standing; it dates



*St. Andrew's, Corbridge*

from 684 or 685, and the dedication stone is still in the chancel wall, over the arch. St. Peter's tower contains doorways, windows, and decorative features: string courses, which separate five sections of the tower. One of the external doorways at St. Peter's is typical of the 'Saxon Arch.'

Though it varied in height, width, size of individual stones, and other characteristics, this is what they looked like. One characteristic of Saxon arches was the use of 'through-stones.' A component stone viewed in the face of the arch would extend straight through the thickness of the wall. This can be seen at St. John's, Escomb, an unusually small doorway, retained from an earlier church in a large Saxo-Norman church from about 1075.

In several churches built between 975 and 1075 AD, the increase in size and skill of design of arches and windows can be seen. Not only are they bigger, but components



*St. Peter's, Monkwearmouth*

such as the imposts (large blocks on which the arch itself sat) have shown clever changes in what had been a simple design. St John the Baptist (Barnack) and St. Bene't (Cambridge) both show unique designs for their imposts in the large chancel arches.

Perhaps I should pause here with an observation. There were/are many churches built during the Anglo-Saxon period. Few survived completely intact. But, in my travels, I think it is not an exaggeration to say that many, many churches have something in them which dates from before 1100. A careful examination, repeated walk-arounds, read-



*St. John the Baptist, Barnack*

ing of the local brochures or on-site post cardswill reveal something that doesn't quite seem to fit, or does not match the rest of the design.

The churches mentioned so far, while no longer completely original, still have that unusual appearance: they are

recognizable as churches not built in recent years. That they have retained ancient fragments, such as arches, doorways, windows, and even sections of walls, is our good fortune. Some arches and doorways have been kept and filled in with later masonry.

This work is possibly hundreds of years old but the parts which are the ancient arch are immediately identifiable. Then there are really puzzling ancient fragments, arches cut through an older arch and finished with different stones. Figure 8 shows such an arch, parts of which are before the year 1000. The church is All Saints, in the village of Laughten-en-le Morthen, Yorkshire. There are other bits inside, and a close inspection rewards the curious traveler.

There are many more churches dating, at least in part, from the Anglo-Saxon Period. Many are found in solitude, with no surviving village nearby, but a nearly complete church.

Locating and visiting these wonderful buildings is an experience worth having. Quite a few have active parishes. As a non-resident non-voting member of a Saxon church built in 980, I am occasionally the Lay Reader at the Sunday Eucharist. When reading the Epistle, I enjoy making eye contact with the parishioners, who are usually grinning, no doubt due to my unusual accent.



*George Hillard is a member and former Senior Warden at Christ Church Anglican, Southern Pines, NC. He taught English and Philosophy at West Point, and has been studying Saxon and Norman churches in the UK for more than 20 years.*

## Parish Highlight

### *Christ the King, Grover Beach, California*

As with many parishes, Christ the King Anglican Church of Grover Beach, California, has experienced many changes throughout its over twenty-year existence. The late Bp. Royal Grote brought the church into the Reformed Episcopal Church nearly seventeen years ago. The parish has worshiped in just about every conceivable space, including an old court building and a mortuary. Most of those years, the church maintained a low-church, 1928 BCP tradition.

Upon moving to the Franciscan friary of Arroyo Grande several years ago, our liturgy expanded to account for the beautiful surroundings in which we found ourselves. This past year we moved into a new, storefront location in Grover Beach and our worship has continued to grow in beauty. We now use the Western Rite liturgy in the Prayer Book published by Lancelot Andrews Press. Our liturgy is infused with incense, Sanctus Bells, icons, and chanting.

The Missionary Diocese of All Saints, into which we were recently received, is an excellent fit for our theological conviction of seven Sacraments, seven Ecumenical Councils,



and the ancient liturgy of the Church as expressed in the Anglican Way. We're home and we couldn't be more thrilled. We're also blessed to be tied to Forward in Faith and view it as a beacon of hope and leadership for the future of Anglicanism and the Catholic Faith in the West.

While our parish is still small yet, around half of our parishioners are under the age of eighteen. A blessing, indeed!



This youthfulness brings with it an eager spirit to worship and participate in the sacramental life of the Church. We believe fellowship extends from the Altar of God. Therefore, our mantra at Christ the King is this: we take liturgical worship seriously, and from there, we party! Christ the King is a family parish and we are intricately involved in one another's lives. Seeking to live sacramentally, we eat together, dance together, laugh together, and weep together. Its small size affords us this fantastic opportunity to know and love one another deeply.

Time and again, visitors inform me that the love they see at Christ the King is both contagious and rare. We are definitely passionate about living out the gospel, helping all those around us

to know the love of God in Christ Jesus. Located in the heart of Grover Beach, in a lower-middle class neighborhood just a few minutes from the ocean, we have a unique opportunity to be a presence of Christ in the community.

On Sundays after Mass, the entire parish heads to a local park to enjoy a picnic lunch with one another, followed by a short time of catechesis. Choral Evensong is offered every Wednesday, which is accompanied by longer catechesis. Many of our students are homeschooled. Fr. Chris offers classes on literature, Church history, and composition throughout the week, to assist parishioner's homeschooling efforts. The classes are taught in true Classical, Socratic style. The result is that our students not only learn, but love to

learn through reading great books and participating in great conversation. Every Friday morning, the students help lead Morning Prayer and the Litany.



*Christ the King is located at 555 South 13th Street, Grover Beach, CA • office@centralcoastanglican.com • 214-208-1856.*

## Thinking Out Loud

*By William Murchison*

I mean, it's amazing. Christians keep discovering the duty, not to mention the possibilities, inherent in evangelism.

That means us, in case you're wondering – we Anglicans.

*The Living Church* (TLC) – notably improved, by the way, and increasingly relevant, under Executive Director-Editor Christopher Wells -- covered in some depth the Evangelism Matters conference held in Dallas before Thanksgiving. "More than 400 conference participants and 75 volunteers," said TLC, "converged on the Church of the Transfiguration to respond to Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's call to create space for evangelism."

Church of the Transfiguration – isn't that a, uh, progressive, umm...? Yes. It is. So what? The wholesomely orthodox Diocese of Dallas supplied the conference – an outcome of the 2015 General Convention – with support and resources. The upshot was, at a minimum, encouraging to all shades and degrees of theological opinion. Gee – make disciples? What an idea!

What a grand and historic idea indeed: as originating with the Risen Lord. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations..." Need I go on? You've heard it. As for an unduly large number of our fellow Anglicans, well...



"The general impression in the greater communion," the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Nigerian Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon, told the gathering, "is that the Episcopal Church does nothing but discuss human sexuality, moving from one crisis to another."

I pause to invite restraint in the pointing of fingers at TEC, save by Anglicans (if any) with a nobler record of bringing in the sheaves and the converts.

Idowu-Fearon, a good friend of the Dallas diocese, dating from last cen-

tury, went on. "This is the Jesus movement, not the Michael Curry movement, and to make sure this outlives Michael Curry, we must plead with our bishops to become chief evangelism officers of their dioceses, priests of their parishes, and each member of their own families."

Because, because – look, this stuff is True. And consequential. These are my own points, not Idowu-Fearon's, though I am confident he would, if asked, endorse them.

There are going to be different takes on the meaning of evangelism, assum-

ing the church can be roused to press its case for same. "This is not a partisan thing," said one of the conference organizers, the Rev. Scott Gunn, who heads up the Forward Movement. Then he mentioned racism, sexism, and xenophobia – near-proprietary issues of the progressive movement in American life; related to, certainly, but not exactly central to the insight that Jesus Christ, only begotten Son of God, sits high above the whole mangy pack of human "isms" and obsessions.

The idea, I believe, is that the second-rate ideals of daily life, generated from the left or the right or anywhere else, are as straw – to borrow Aquinas' image – compared to the glory we have seen.

Or not seen. That's highly possible, and it's where evangelism comes in as a sovereign remedy for the helplessness and hopelessness that humanity daily

encounters.

We start to "get" that now? Why just now? Why haven't we gotten it along? Part of the blame – a significant part – rests with sociological clerics who either sidestep sin and salvation as topics likely to undermine the stewardship campaign, or who persist in the misguided belief that God has political opinions to which we/He need to give effect. Note the inherently divisive nature of the political calling. The right runs off the left, and the left runs off the right. And, as a ditty I recall from the 1960s, concerning politicized folk music, put it: "The guy in the middle said, 'Oh, dear.'"

That's nevertheless the thing about the Gospel. Abuse it, abandon it, pick it up again and – whaddyaknow? – it's the same as before. You have only to put a little Windex on it. Quickly enough, you see right into it. Its old attractions

sparkle: love, peace, reconciliation, truth. Truth – how things are. Not how you imagine – but how they are, and how they were meant to be prior to a famous encounter with a talking snake. And what was done to bring the resultant disorder under control.

Faithful evangelists are supposed to know about this stuff – nay, to exult in it, as did, come to think of it, a multitude of the heavenly host at about this time long years ago. "Glory to God in the highest," they sang – appropriately enough – "and on earth peace, good will toward men."



*William Murchison is an author and journalist, living in Dallas, Texas.*

## The Light of Christ

*By Fr. Gene Geromel*

When I was a postulant in the Diocese of Bethlehem (Pennsylvania, not the Holy Land) I was required to go to a conference to see whether or not I should be considered for seminary. We drove to Richmond Virginia and stayed at a conference center for several days. There are many things I remember about the experience but the thing I remember most clearly was one of my roommates. He was an officer in the Navy and was an admiral's aide. He told us that the previous Easter he was in a small town in Greece. Easter Eve he stood in the town center outside the local church. The doors of the church were opened and the parish priest came out with the Pascal Candle. He chanted, "The Light of Christ". The people in the square lit their candles from the Pascal Candle. He spoke with utter awe about the whole square shining brightly with the light of Christ.

It is natural for us to think of candles and light at Easter, but do we consider the image of light in Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and the feast of the Presentation? In his first volume of "The Church's Year of Grace" Dr. Pius Parsch writes, "It is the glorious symbol of sun and light that gives this season its



unity. All is centered on Christ the true Sun. Christmas really has no date historically, making the symbolism of the winter solstice, sol invictus, most appropriate. Advent is dawn; Christmas the rising sun; Epiphany, high noon; at Candlemas, the ruddy, sinking disc already foreshadows the Savior's death."

Now my wife tells me that Candlemas is the "leaping of the sun," when the sun's angle rises above the earth's curvature and causes a sudden increase in noticeable light daily. Certainly, the leaping would bring forth another image (that of resurrection). In any event, the image of light is important.



Christ is the light of the world. The Gospel of John uses the image of light so effectively. Nicodemus and Judas both leave the light and go into the darkness. Nicodemus comes to Jesus in the dark so that he is not seen by his peers. Not comprehending what Jesus was saying he goes back into the night. Judas leaves the Upper Room to betray Jesus. He goes out into the night. Later, Judas comes into the Garden to hand him over to the police. Later, Nicodemus renounced the darkness and sought to serve Christ. The other stayed in the dark and hung himself.

I do not know if you have even been in total darkness but it's spooky. When I was in the ROTC, we deployed out into the field to perform our night exercises. You could not see the man two feet in front of you. You did not know where you were stepping, or whether or not danger was in front of you. Some of you have been in the woods at night with no moon. The ancients would say that their god Pan filled you with "panic." Have you ever had an employee, student, child or, God forbid, spouse keep you in the dark? It did not bode well, did it? Bad things tend to be done in darkness (except for surprise parties).

When we are in the light, everything is different. You can see everything. It is clear and bright and nothing is hidden. You can walk without fear. There is little worry of tripping or falling. Everything can be seen.

Our God is a God of light. In Advent, we live in expectation of the Coming of Christ, not just as a child born in a stable, but as the Lord of the Second Coming in which Christ will judge the "quick and the dead." In our parishes we symbolize this in part with the lighting of the Advent Candles. (I know the purists among us will say that this wasn't a practice of the undivided church. In fact, it is a German Lutheran tradition. But the children of the congregation love lighting the candles and it gives us another home devotion.) At Christmas, at St. Bartholomew's, we light all the candles in the Church. We even bring out the aisle candles which we otherwise only use for weddings. At Epiphany, we follow the bright star to worship and adore Jesus. We put the Wise Men with the manger. At the Feast of the Presentation, we actually bless all the candles we will use in our services in the coming year. These are



all images and symbols of these festive seasons.

How do we live out the symbols and pageant of our worship? In Advent, we prepare for the coming of Christ. Dr. Parsch would remind us that Christ has already come into the world, but that we are preparing for the Second Coming. The bottom line is: Are you prepared to meet your Maker? If not, why not? Some of you believe in the Rapture (at least, you like the books). There are two things wrong with the concept of the Rapture. One, and most important, it was never taught by the undivided Church. None of the Church Fathers write about it. In fact, it is a concept that is less than one hundred and fifty years old. Perhaps the most troubling aspect of it is its arrogance.

Think of the bumper sticker, "In the event of rapture, this car will be empty." Is there anyone who can say that they are definitely going to Heaven and not Hell? No, we rely on the mercy of God knowing ourselves to be miserable sinners. In fact, it is that thought which leads us to the joy of Christmas. The Incarnation shows us the love of God for us, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son". His Son came into the world and became man. That was the ultimate Christmas present and is what we celebrate. It should fill our hearts with thanksgiving and

humility because we have done nothing to earn it.

When we enter the Epiphany season we should be reminded that we are to share that gift with others. Just as the Wise Men came from the ends of the world to worship Christ, we are to take Christ into the world even if it is just our next store neighbor. The Feast of the Presentation should remind all of us that if the only Son of God and his earthly family took part in the ceremonies of the Temple, how much more are we bound to worship God seeking the light of his Son and to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

Let's give thanks to God for sending His light into the world.

*Fr. Gene Geromel is Rector of St. Bartholomew's, Swartz Creek, Michigan.*

# God's Gift of Life

By Georgette Forney

A young, unmarried woman receives very unexpected news. Her fiancé does not handle it well. She anticipates the scorn of her close-knit, religious community. The woman's story sounds all too familiar. However, her story is anything but normal, because this is Mary, the Mother of Jesus. The child in her womb was anything but a mistake—He is the greatest gift given to man, God Incarnate.

In Luke's Gospel, Chapter 1, verse 29, Mary is described as *greatly troubled* by the Angel's greeting and the news of her pending pregnancy. I think it is fair to say that every young woman who finds out she is facing an unplanned pregnancy, especially out of wedlock feels greatly troubled. Given that an angel is NOT present to assure her that God has a purpose and plan for her child, she probably feels very alone and afraid. She may also feel embarrassed and ashamed for having sex outside of marriage and for not being more careful and responsible.

I know that is how I felt when I was 16-years-old and found out I was pregnant. Instead of looking to God or my family for help, I looked for a way to hide my mistake and the shame I felt for being pregnant and engaging in irresponsible behavior. To keep one secret (unmarried sex), I had an abortion, which then became another secret I carried in the deep recesses of my heart for 19 years.

Personal insecurities and the fear of becoming a mother prevented me and so many other woman from embracing our unplanned pregnancies as planned blessings from God. While Mary had the unique honor of giving birth to Jesus Christ, Savior of the world, all of us who have aborted our children will never know the blessings and talents God had endowed our children with and the plans He had for them to glorify Him and make a difference in the world.

As a society and especially as the Church, we must remember pregnancy is not a sin, premarital sexual intimacy is. Yet ask yourself for a moment what would typically evoke a more negative reaction in families: the knowledge that a teen is sexually active or the knowledge that a teen has become pregnant?

If, in one way or another, the message is communicated that *teen pregnancy* will cause more of a problem than *teen sex*, then we are inadvertently creating an incentive for abortion. After all, if one can abort the pregnancy without the family's knowledge, why endure the trouble that will result by revealing it?

Parents in the home need to clearly communicate that, although they have a standard of abstinence, if their teenager is pregnant or has contracted a sexually transmitted disease, they need to know they can come to you. Untreated STD's can turn into pelvic inflammatory disease, which often renders girls infertile. As parents and members of the Church, you need to make it clear that your goal is to *encourage chastity*, not *punish pregnancy*.

Later in Luke 2 and in Matthew 2 we are told that the birth of Jesus brought shepherds, an angel, and the three Wise Men to Bethlehem to acknowledge and honor the baby



in the manger.

Every story in Scripture provides a model for how God wants His Church to respond to situations, and here at Anglicans for Life we believe that one of the lessons we can glean from the birth of Jesus is that every life created by God is sacred and every life must be welcomed. While the Wise Men and shepherds go out of their way to greet Jesus in a humble town in an even more humble stall, I believe God is calling His Church to go out of our way to reach women facing unplanned pregnancies with the love of God.

As we gather together during this Christmas season, take time to reflect on how you and your church would respond to an unexpected pregnancy of a single female parishioner, or the priest's daughter. Would you scorn the mother and child? Or would you welcome them both to your congregation and seek to help them? We as the Church must come around young mothers facing an unexpected pregnancy, because if we claim to support Life, we must support mother and child. And, no matter how the child was conceived, that child is loved by God and has been created for a purpose!

Loving people like me who made mistakes and bad choices allows you to speak hope to the hopeless, truth to the deceived, and LIFE to those hurting, desperate, and afraid. Furthermore, you can point them to the One who has loved them since the world began: their Creator, Father God. He will love them more than anyone else can, and He will never leave them or forsake them. You can point them to the One who can forgive them and radically transform their lives.



You can also express God's love through practical resources such as diapers, baby clothing, gift cards, or volunteering to babysit. Without loving support and practical help, women feel they have no choice but abortion. BUT when words and actions of godly love are modeled, they are given the courage to choose life for their baby and embrace motherhood.

Anglicans for Life has additional resources and ideas to help the church and family come along side young mothers, and we welcome the opportunity to equip you for life-affirming outreach in your community.

Our prayer is that people would always see life as the gift

God meant it to be, not only at Christmas, but every day of the year.



*Georgette Forney is President of Anglicans For Life. See: [anglicansforlife.org](http://anglicansforlife.org).*

## Don We Now Our Lady's Mantle

*By Brian Pickard*

Go ahead. You know you want to sing it. A title like this demands an obligatory "Fa la la—la la la—la-la-la." Deep into a slightly longer Adventide than usual, and I'm already saying my mea culpas for tempting you with Christmastide before the Holy Family even leave for Bethlehem; before the Altar Guild and volunteers have had the chance to do the Greening of the Church after next Sunday's Mass.

But bear with me. Instead of a certain apparel, this new lyric merely invites us to do, as the famous hymn says: "Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness." As we have passed through Gaudete (Be Joyful or Rose) Sunday—the lighter third Sunday of Advent—the Sunday to look at rejoicing—there is still a bit to go. We liked the rose candle, but the part of Advent that society, and worse, many in the Church avoid (hey, I've been guilty, too!)—is going deep into the penitential and reflective part of Advent. It is the part where we change, where we prepare to adore Jesus at the Nativity.

Wherever one finds oneself in the spectrum of debate on liturgical colors in Advent, sky blue, sapphire, indigo, violet, roman purple etc, we will agree that the period is markedly more somber. But it is not at all disagreeable. It is pensive. It is thoughtful. It is anticipatory.

In the English catholic tradition, we are famous for an emphasis on the Incarnation. Sacramental life—Our Lord imparting graces through the Church and through things—is often one of the draws for people like myself who come from other traditions. It was the sacramentality of the Liturgy that drew me. It was the grace that came through the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament that became for me a must, even if it took a while to "get."

More subtly alluring, was a small image of Our Lady of Walsingham in a flickering niche in a church. Raised in a tradition where we didn't have more to do with Mary than we had to, I am convinced she spoke to me in this calm, noble depiction of the Incarnation. Here she presented her Son to the world, and it didn't bother me at all when attending daily Mass at the local Anglo-Catholic parish near my university.

At that time, in college, I didn't realize I was experiencing something of the Incarnation. I don't even remember knowing the word at the time. However, as the years wore on, my trepidations about Mary turned into a love, trust, and devotion I believe the Blessed Mother has prayed for me.



Everyone has their thorn, their set of challenges, that God gives the grace to walk through. Since including it in other writings, it is no secret that one such in my life is living continentally and celibately, while experiencing same-sex attraction. Indeed, the grace of Jesus has carried me through. And I know Our Lady has given many men in my situation similar comfort. After all, many men experiencing homosexual feelings are famous for relating a bit more closely to their mothers—surprise surprise! So, it makes sense that many of them find solace in her.

Now, fair warning, a bit of rough before returning to the smooth. "Not again... not THIS subject again!", some might be grunting. "Can't we go one season in Anglicanism without this sex stuff coming up?" Well, too bad. With the Church of England, as well as other Anglican Communion provinces,

waffling and crumpling all through 2016 under the weight of social justice warriors bullying them since the January Canterbury Primates Meeting (and long before), too bad.

If the clergy and lay leaders of the Communion, especially in the West, aren't willing to live and teach within the Conciliar received Teaching of the Church, then we need the Mantle of Our Lady MORE than ever. If bishops aren't willing to be truthful loving shepherds, they are shirking their responsibility as Our Lady's sons. If they are going to sell men and women like myself a shoddy bill of goods, then they don't seem to love us very much. It is as if they subvert on telling us what our itching ears would rather hear.

It may seem tacky, but Anglo-Catholics have a notorious reputation for letting things slide, particularly when the Establishment enables it—for letting the incense cloud become a place of convenient forgetting. This has been so much so that it made itself into Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, where Jasper says to his cousin Charles at University, "Oh, and beware of Anglo-Catholics... they're all sodomites with unpleasant accents." While the Cousin Charleses in our lives, oftentimes with their own unpleasant accents, may be boorish, uncharitable, and a bit simplistic, they do act as inconvenient mirrors, too.

So, this is a call to others dealing with homosexuality, especially the guys, who make up the statistical ma-

jority of that 1-3% of the population. Arrange the flowers, polish the brass, sit on those committees, read the Lesson, chair the parish fundraiser, whatever, but don't forget that the Blessed Virgin Mary is your Mother. She will pray for you. She will hear your cries. She will bring you closer to her Son. When we "deck the halls" to prepare for the Feast of the Nativity and the Incarnation, our lyric, and really everyone's, should be to "Don we now Our Lady's Mantle". (And those who pray for us, please keep doing so. This line of spiritual attack has been very nefarious and vicious across orthodox Christendom, and it is getting bolder.)

Of course I don't mean that we should presume to wear her mantle, literally. What I do mean is that the Incarnation came with her *Fiat*, "Let it be unto me according to thy word." We are to heed and "don," wear, her example. May our prayer be to give our yes to Jesus; our will, our emotions, our troubles, hopes and fears, all that we are. With that, His gift back to us this Christmastide would be greater than we could ever give or imagine.

Adventide, Christmastide, and Epiphanytide famously bring sludge to the surface in many of us. The "holidays," especially in their backwards secular form, play backdrop to a lot of pain. But the Communion of Saints is full of people who went through what we go through and more. There is nothing new under the sun. Sin, grief, and suffering are not new; alcoholism,

sloth, avarice, grief, stealing, pride, sexual temptation, gambling, procrastination, adultery, hatefulness, entitlement, critical spirit, scrupulousness, substance abuse, despair, depression, perfectionism, poverty, and on. No one is exempt from the catalogue of imperfection.

But a great thing in our era of confusion is that Our Lady is unapologetically Mother, "Vive Her Difference!" The Blessed Mother is an icon of motherhood, whether our biological mother was ideal or not. Our Lady cares for us. Let's rest under her Mantle with her prayers to fortify us.

Maybe she can show us how to extend the love of Jesus Christ to others in this Season. Maybe there is something we can do for someone else to bring them closer to her? Maybe with our prayers, our generosity, our time? Be assured of my prayers as I light a candle for all of you reading this article and please pray for me, a sinner.

A most holy Adventide to all and merry Feast of the Incarnation!



Brian Pickard is a layman in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

## The Epiphany Season

### *Bishop Keith Ackerman suggests some activities*

Liturgists generally refer to the Pentecost and Epiphany Seasons as "Ordinary time." While there are certainly appropriate reasons for this, from another point of view, this is not a helpful term. The word, "ordinary" in daily usage is different from the technical use. Perhaps we need to find ways to explore the rich liturgical traditions found during these Seasons.

The Book of Occasional Services is a superb book, one that clergy regularly use, but a book that should not be confined to the Rector's Study or the Sacristy. In it one finds not only Offices and liturgies which highlight our Feast Days, but also Offices and prayers which highlight "Ordinary Time."

For many Episcopalians, the Epiphany Season is an awkward "green" season. It begins with the Feast Day itself on January 6, and ends with Ash Wednesday. For older Episco-

paliens, we recall the pre-Lent Season, which consisted of Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima. With the removal of these three weeks from our calendar, we are given a longer Epiphany Season, which concludes with "Transfiguration Sunday" — a "White Sunday."

If the Feast of the Holy Name is confusing to people, Epiphany must be even more confusing. "Look at those people, they still have their decorations up. Christmas has been over for twelve days!" "Hey, Father do you want me to help you get the star down off your house?" "Christmas is over, don't you know!"

Liturgical Christians should not only know better, but we shouldn't succumb to the pressure to accept the new and unimproved secular version of Christian Christmas. Epiphany, and especially the actual Twelfth Day Epiphany Mass,



should be absolutely splendid. After all, what is the origin of gift giving at Christmas time?

The Feast of the Epiphany is the celebration of the presentation of the Christ Child to the Wise Men from the East and the manifestation of God Incarnate to the world. The Wise Men from the East followed a Star to Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, heeding the prophecy in the Old Testament. There they found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. They knelt down and worshiped the baby Jesus, and then presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They are sometimes referred to as the Three Kings, because it was thought that only kings would have the wealth to be able to travel and to present such gifts. Today the commemoration of the Visitation of the baby Jesus in Bethlehem by the Magi (St. Matthew Chapter 2:1-12) is the day when all Christians acknowledge Jesus Christ as God and man, Lord and Savior.

In some parishes the Wise Men of the Crèche are placed at a distance in the Church and “move” towards the Crèche each day until arriving on Epiphany at the Nativity Scene. This can certainly be done in our homes also. This act can give our children an opportunity to participate and to learn. To celebrate this feast day the Church has a variety of traditions for church events and home celebrations.

### Epiphany Gifts

In many countries, the Feast of the Epiphany is traditionally the day that Christmas gifts were exchanged. On this day (that commemorates the visit of the wise men and their gifts to Jesus) in Italy, the gifts are distributed by the good witch Befana (from “Epiphany”), in Russia a woman named Babushka would leave the gifts around the Christmas tree. In Spain and Mexico it is the custom for the Three Kings to bring the gifts. Epiphany is about giving gifts, but the most precious gift of all is the gift of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the World. At the end of the Epiphany Mass (which should, by the way, utilize many candles), it can be very dramatic and entertaining to have three “Wise Men” dressed in appropriate costume to enter the Church quite “mysteriously.” They can then lead the people out of



the Church and into the Parish Hall for the party. At the party one of the Wise Men with the box of gold could give the gold foil wrapped chocolate coins to everyone as a gift.

### Epiphany Cake

The classical Epiphany Cake concept is quite exciting! The prevailing reason to have a cake is to select by chance a King and Queen to rule over the Festivities. There are various customs attributed to the Epiphany Cake. One custom is to carefully hide a dry bean in the cake and if a Lady gets the bean she can choose a king and if a Gentleman were to get the bean in his piece of cake then he would choose a queen to share the “reign.” The other custom is to put a coin in each of two cakes, one for males and one for females. The guests who find the coins then become the King and Queen of the Epiphany party. Once when our son was only two, and we were at a party at Nashotah House Seminary, he chose the gooiest cup cake on the table. Jo tried to talk him into one with a little less icing, but to no avail. Yep, you guessed it, our son Keith, reigned as King! The cake could be decorated with crowns, three Wise Men, or symbols of the gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Another fun party idea is to make three cakes, each formed and decorated as a different King’s crown.

### Epiphany Party

This is the best occasion to have a Christmas Pageant. After all – when

did the Wise Men arrive?

At the Sermon time during the evening Epiphany Mass the lights are turned down. Children dressed as participants of the Nativity scene take their places in the stable. The three wise men walk in holding the gifts for the Christchild. The preacher tells the story as the wise men and others “adore” the Christchild. The song At your Crèche Dear Jesus is sung and perhaps another song like Away in a manger.

The dinner could be a Mexican dinner or an English dinner, or an international dinner of traditional Christmas goodies brought by church members. After the dinner the Wise men could hand out gifts to the children (three little gifts each or gold candy coins).

There could be three cakes decorated as crowns. One sort of an Asian design, an English design and an African design. The crowns could be one male, one female, and one neutral. The ladies and girls would be served from the female styled crown and the males from the male styled crown. The persons getting the bean or coin or baby from each cake would be the King or Queen of Epiphany Party.

No Epiphany party is complete without the traditional Piñata. If there were three piñatas held individually by each of the three Wise Men that would be another way to use the “Kings.” If the piñatas could be made or purchased to resemble the North Star another symbol then is used.

Obviously festivities should include

music. Christmas and Epiphany music performed by musicians in the church or perhaps a sing along for everyone should be enjoyable. Clever games and prizes would be entertaining. Piñatas are a traditional Epiphany activity. Investing money in an exhilarating party is investing in the discipleship of the people. Events like these can draw people into the fold, where, once there, God can touch their hearts and bring them closer to Him.

Some ideas for decorations may include: Hanging silver stars above the buffet table, and statues of the Wise Men or the three gifts as centerpieces, to add a little glamour to the social. If

there were people seated at smaller tables, wrapped gift boxes would make an inexpensive individual centerpiece. Perhaps a little holly or evergreen and a candle could be included.

The finale of the party has traditionally been the Bonfire. In some communities burning Christmas trees is still legal, and a bonfire is a great event. Boy, no one will ever forget the year we made great friends with the men at the local Fire Department. We were very cautiously burning the greens, after the Epiphany party, in the large circle of the driveway of the Church in Texas when several very nice men drove up. They actually offered to come ahead of

time the following year to oversee the burning, instead of having to be called by panicked neighbors! In some places having someone provide a “shredder” could be a good lesson in the “recycling” of trees with wood chips for spring garden mulch.



*Bishop Keith Ackerman is the retired VIIIth Bishop of Quincy and now lives in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.*

## A Call to Prayer After the Election

*By Archbishop Foley Beach*

These have been historic days in the U.S. and will have a ripple effect that cannot yet be predicted. I want to take a moment to speak to you about the next few days.

Some of our members have been encouraged by this election, and some of been discouraged by its outcome. Firstly, I want to thank the Canadian and Mexican members of our province for praying for your brothers and sisters in the United States this week. The diversity of the Anglican Church in North America is one of its strengths, and a reflection of the image of God. Being a province that spans not just political parties, but multiple nations is a unique gift, and provides helpful perspective in times such as these.

Secondly, to those in the United States, regardless of how you voted, this morning we are all even more aware of the fact that our country is in need of healing. There is a need for reconciliation across the divisions of race, ethnicity, class, and political par-



ty. While the issues are complicated, it is clear that many in our country are scared and feeling wounded. This is a time for the Church to be a refuge and an example. While living in this earthly kingdom, we must allow our citizenship in the heavenly kingdom to lead

us in thought, word, and deed. The depth of this reconciliation can only be accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit, and I call on each of us to care for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Thirdly, I ask for your prayers for

### *The Forward in Faith Daily Prayer*

**O God our Father, bless Forward in Faith. Inspire us and strengthen our fellowship. Help us to witness to the saving power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that with love and patience we may win many hearts to Evangelical Faith, Catholic Truth, Apostolic Order, and Godly Life within the fellowship of thy Holy Church. We ask this through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. AMEN.**



President-elect Donald Trump, and I ask you to continue to pray for President Barack Obama, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and President Enrique Peña Nieto. Pray that each of these leaders would govern with wisdom, care, and courage. Pray for a smooth transition, and for President-elect Trump to select wise counselors to surround him as he becomes President. Practice 1 Timothy 2:1 ("First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.") And pray for healing and reconciliation in our nation.

Lastly, I write this to you having just stepped off of a flight to Asia where I will be ministering and sharing fellowship with our Christian brothers and sisters in Singapore, India, and Nepal. I am reminded how so many around the world look to the United States for good leadership, but

more importantly, for our responsibility to pray and work that the whole world will hear and have the opportunity to experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

Let us pray,

*Almighty God, we pray that you will lead the nations of the world into the way of righteousness; and so guide and direct our leaders, that your people may enjoy the blessings of freedom and peace. Grant that our leaders may impartially administer justice, uphold integrity and truth, restrain wickedness and vice, and maintain true religion.* (Texts for Common Prayer, Prayers of the People)

The Most Rev. Dr. Foley Beach

Archbishop and Primate of the Anglican Church in North America.



## A Guide to the 39 Articles

*By Fr. Richard Cumming*

### IV. OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST (Part I)

CHRIST did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature; wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day.

The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is undoubtedly one of the most controversial elements of the Christian faith. This is because resurrection from the dead goes against all common sense and common experience. The atheist will deny the resurrection, ostensibly, because it appears to go against the natural lifecycle of organisms. However, on a much deeper level, the non-believer will deny the resurrection because it implies that man possesses an intrinsic value, whereas, since, according to the atheist, man is merely a clusters of atoms randomly configured together to form an organism for a period of time, man possesses no intrinsic value that is worth being perpetuated beyond the grave.

The atheist will tell us that everything worthwhile that a man did in his life certainly had an extrinsic value in the sense that it was valued by others in his life, and that this extrinsic value certainly persists through our memory of the deceased, as Ludwig Feuerbach writes in his infamous *Thoughts on Death and Immortality*.

However, for the atheist, since everything in the cosmos is entirely random and objectively meaningless, resurrection can have no place whatsoever in the godless universe because it involves an affirmation of the intrinsic value of man as opposed to his merely extrinsic value. For the atheist, to borrow from Farrer, the atoms simply don't have it in them, they're not that valuable. Resurrection, therefore, is a direct challenge to the atheist's worldview. It challenges their assumption that the life of the cosmos and man within it is utterly bereft of meaning, purpose and ultimately value itself.

It is this antagonism between the disbelieving and Chris-



tian worldviews that explains precisely why there is a world of difference between a humanist funeral sermon and a catholic funeral sermon.

On the one hand, the humanist funeral sermon will focus upon the extrinsic value of the deceased, extolling the contribution the departed loved one made in his or her life: she didn't kick the dog too often; he helped Bessie with her groceries, etc. On the other hand, the catholic funeral sermon will focus upon the intrinsic value of the deceased, explaining that the deceased is defined not only by their acts



but primarily by their relation to the resurrected Christ in which they are also resurrected by grace. Atheism and the catholic faith of the Fathers of the Church are worlds apart, and it is in the doctrine of the resurrection that the dissonance between the opposing visions of reality acquires particular salience, because it is at this juncture that the bifurcation between denying the intrinsic value of man and affirming the intrinsic value of man takes place.

In the last couple of centuries, modern Christian theology has sought to accommodate itself to atheistical materialism by disregarding everything that cannot conform to the categories of natural scientific explanation. Miracles, since they apparently run counter to the established laws of nature, fall into that category, and therefore contemporary theologians will tell us that they can have no place in a “purified” or “enlightened” Christianity. Accordingly, self-described Christian theologians attempt to explain away or spiritualize the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ in order to avoid the radical polarization with modern discourse that the traditional doctrine of the resurrection entails.

For example, the Roman Catholic Hans Küng collapses the resurrection into the ascension into heaven, enabling him to avoid the question of a physical resurrection upon earth. Paul Tillich views the resurrection in neo-Hegelian philosophical categories as the symbolic act of essence definitively overcoming the limitations of existence while under the limitations

of existence, reconciling existence to essence (whatever that means...). However, in their endeavor to show the compatibility of Christianity and modern disbelief, such theologians attempt to hide from the fundamental polarity between the Christianity and modernist atheism.

Article IV of the Thirty Nine Articles has the singular merit that it avoids all ambiguity on the subject: Article IV triumphantly avers the truth of the catholic faith of the Nicene Creed, stating that “Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man’s nature.” Article IV is so crystal clear about the nature of the resurrection that there is no spiritualizing or explaining away possible: Christ “took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man’s nature.” According to Article IV, everything that belongs to man is resurrected, and this is because, as we have already seen, in the Christian worldview everything that truly belongs to man is affirmed as having not only extrinsic value but also intrinsic value.

The atheist will tell us, however, that the concept of the resurrection is just a form of wishful thinking; that it is because we desperately yearn for an intrinsic value that is not there that we concoct the idea of the resurrection from the dead. Considering of the diametric opposition of the two worldviews, it is no surprise that many of us will have dissipated many hours in dialogue with atheists on this particular

point. In Colossians 3, however, St. Paul provides a way out of the perpetual intellectual back-and-forth between the Christian and the atheist over the resurrection of Christ.

St. Paul begins this chapter with the phrase “if ye then be risen with Christ,” using this phrase as the premise for the rest of Colossians 3. It is this premise, that we are raised with Christ, that means that we should live according to his resurrected life and overcome the power of the flesh (sin) by the power of the spirit (grace). The whole premise of Colossians 3 is that we are already risen with Christ. And in Colossians 2, St. Paul emphasizes this point as a truth to which we must strictly adhere:

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

We shall consider the implications of this in the next issue.



*Fr. Richard Cumming is Rector of the Anglican Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Liverpool, New York in the Diocese of the Holy Cross.*



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