

*Fr Hoyal Writes*

## **CELEBRATING THE FAITH**

We may technically be out of recession - just - but these are hardly merry times.

The grim succession of coffins from Afghanistan continues unabated and it concentrates the mind fearfully. The Chilcot enquiry is making us ask unsettling questions about our invasion of Iraq.

We may soon forget the devastation suffered by the people of Haiti. But armchair sympathy is notoriously fickle, and they certainly won't.

Recent horrific cases of cruelty and degradation, some perpetrated upon children, and some by children, have sickened and disturbed us all.

Meanwhile, boarded-up shops and unlet premises all around us have their own story to tell. And for Anglican Christians in particular, there is little comfort amid the confrontations and contradictions that typify current church politics.

There are different reactions when bad news is at high tide. Some lose heart and succumb to pessimism. Others chose to shut it all out and simply live for themselves in the fastest lane they can get into.

Commendably, others seek to practise cautious optimism and remain conscientious. But in challenging times this is not easy.

One thing that won't help, as far as Christians is concerned, is a negative attitude to Lent.

Negativity sometimes means simply ignoring Lent as an essentially gloomy and unhelpful exercise. But it can be just as negative to launch into Lent, teeth clenched, as a matter of stern duty. Does God really want that?

I do hope we shall want to embrace the opportunities of Lent – and, yes, even its disciplines – as opportunities for celebration. Indeed our overall theme for Lent 2010 is *Celebrating the Faith: We Believe and Trust*.

These are the words that this year will be displayed on the altar during Lent. I hope they will characterize our whole approach to the season.

Our faith is a rich gift and a joyful privilege. It is something we should be immensely proud of, something that deserves to be celebrated. We need it, and so does the world. We don't have to be reticent or apologetic.

Accordingly, our Lent programme this year will direct us to core aspects of our Christian patrimony as we celebrate faith itself, and Christian faith basics like prayer and scripture, sacrament and church.

It is time to recover a revitalized sense of the wonderful gift character of what we have received as followers of the One who gave himself so totally, and never ceases to do so still.

To my mind this is the approach most likely to provide the antidote to those unhelpful tendencies towards escapism or depression in the face of life's challenges. And I think it's more likely than our Christian relentlessness to help us address those challenges purposefully and effectively.

So, this Lent, I'm Celebrating Faith. And I hope you will want to too.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Hoyle".

## **Bristol's Christian Bookshops**

We missed SPCK when it closed, but were grateful to Wesley Owen for diversifying as a result. However, they were put up for sale in November, and opportunities to browse before purchase seemed very limited. However, news in Bristol at least is good, and our Park Street shop have sent us a clarifying statement:

"Following the decision to put Wesley Owen up for sale, we are pleased to announce that a buyer has been found for the Bristol store. The

Australian Christian retailer Koorong has purchased the store, along with a further seven others nationwide. Koorong are a family-owned business, established in the late seventies, who now operate 18 stores across Australia. We are delighted that we will be able to continue our ministry in and around the city and look forward to serving you well into the future.”

## **COFFEE AT ALL SAINTS**

Coffee, tea and juice after our main Sunday morning services has always been an important part of 'welcoming' and socialising as a congregation. This only happens because of hard work put in by the organiser of the rotas and the volunteers who make and serve.

Muriel Hoyal has been coffee co-ordinator for the last couple of years and is now standing down. We give her our grateful thanks. We are delighted, not to say relieved, that Mary Dowling has agreed to take on the role from 1st January.

We always need more volunteers to make things run smoothly. If you would like to join our happy band of coffee volunteers please let Mary or me know. This is a great way to serve All Saints and its people in a very practical way.

*Janice Hopkins*  
*Social and Welcoming Committee*

## **DAY OF PRAYER - Please, please pray!**

As requested by Bishop Andrew and colleagues, on Monday 22 February we are keeping an important *Day of Prayer for Discernment*.

This has been prompted by the Pope Benedict's remarkable offer of an ordinariate for Anglicans (worldwide, not just in the UK) who may feel unable to stay within the now sadly fractured Anglican family.

We need to pray not least about the continuing discussions at General Synod level and what different outcomes might mean for different types of C of E traditionalists, and for the Church of England as a whole.

Perhaps we also need to begin reflecting on how these matters may affect us at All Saints. In due course it may be appropriate to arrange opportunities for discussion, and the PCC may wish to give some thought to issues involved.

The public programme for the Day is:

<b>7.30 am</b>	<b>Mass</b>
<b>9.00 am</b>	<b>Morning Prayer</b>
<b>12.00 noon</b>	<b>Midday Prayer</b>
<b>3.00 pm</b>	<b>Afternoon Prayer</b>
<b>6.00 pm</b>	<b>Evening Prayer</b>
<b>7.00 pm</b>	<b>Mass</b>

But we hope church members will look in at different times, so that a chain of prayer can be maintained. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed throughout as a focus for prayer and adoration, and material to assist reflection and prayer will be available.

Whatever your convictions, do try and participate if you can. And do try hard to empathize courteously and sympathetically with individuals and groups with whom you may disagree.

## ALL SAINTS ARTS: FEBRUARY MUSIC AT ALL SAINTS

### *Friday 5 February at 7.30 pm*

**Clifton High School Choral Society** conducted by Andrew Cleaver  
Clifton High School present an interesting programme of 20<sup>th</sup> Century English music ranging from Vaughan-Williams ('Five Mystical Songs'), Tippett ('Spirituals'), Britten to Rutter.

*Tickets £7 (Concessions £5) in advance from the school or at the door*

### *Saturday 27 February at 4.00 pm*

**Concert Matinee** Josephine Goddard (soprano)

This outstanding young singer returns to delight us with another delicious programme of 'Songs for the stage' from Purcell, Handel and Mozart through to Rogers and Hammerstein.

*Admission free – retiring collection. Tea and cake after.*

## **HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY (27 January 2010)**

*Article by the Revd Kim Taplin, Chaplain of Clifton College, and reprinted here by kind permission.*

**“If I could enclose all the evil of our time in one image, I would choose this image....an emaciated man, with head dropped and shoulders curved, on whose face and in whose eyes not a trace of a thought is to be seen.”**

Primo Levi, *If This is a Man*. (Abacus, London, 1987), p. 96

This disturbing description by Jewish novelist and death camp survivor, Primo Levi in his book, *If This is a Man*, powerfully characterises the gravity of human suffering endured by many Jews in Hitler's Germany and in Nazi-occupied Europe.

How did the Jews cope? What did their suffering do to their faith? Some, almost understandably, gave up on God. Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, originally a devoutly-religious boy, described his

personal experience of ‘the death of God’ in his haunting book, *Night*:

**“Never shall I forget that night, the first night in the camp, which turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever. Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God himself. Never.”**

Elie Wiesel, *Night. His Record of Childhood in the Death Camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald*. (Penguin, London, 1981), p. 45

Whilst some Jews denied God, many others clung to their belief in the Lord despite the horrors of the Holocaust. Even in the death camps, the Talmud was secretly recited, festivals were observed and people prayed. With a combination of blind faith and belligerence, many Jews refused to take their leave of God despite his silence. Swiss theologian Hans Küng cites an example of this unshakeable trust in God, despite everything, written by a Jew on the walls of the Warsaw ghetto:

**“I believe in the sun even when it does not shine.  
I believe in love, even when I cannot feel it.  
I believe in God even when I do not see him.”**

Hans Küng, *Judaism. The Religious Situation of Our Time*. (SCM, London, 1992), p. 608

For many Holocaust victims, the Biblical character of Job served as the model of how to derive meaning from belief in God in the midst of extreme suffering. Job was certainly put through the mill – his children died in an accident, his servants were murdered, he lost all of his livestock and he was covered from head to foot in painful,

infectious sores. Job ferociously complains to God but he never abandons his trust in him. Paradoxically, he maintains faith in the very God who is ultimately responsible for his plight, and who is both Judge and Defender. Job famously declares:

**“I know that my vindicator lives and that he will rise last to speak in court; I shall discern my witness standing at my side and see my defending counsel, even God himself, whom I shall see with my own eyes, I myself and no other.”**

*Job 19.25-27*

The Holocaust happened in Christendom. It was conceived in a country and nurtured on a continent shaped by centuries of Christian tradition and culture. During the War, Pope Pius XII was not outspoken on Jewish issues, and there is little doubt that greater moral vision from the Vatican could have prevented some of the suffering. The landmark declaration of the Catholic Church issued by the Vatican in 1998 acknowledged and sought forgiveness for the participation of Christians in the terrible evil of the Nazi persecution, and the attempted systematic annihilation of the Jewish people. The document concludes with signs of hope for the future:

**“We pray that our sorrow for the tragedy that the Jewish people suffered in our century will lead to a new relationship with the Jewish people. We wish to turn awareness of past sins into a firm resolve to build a new future in which there will be no more anti-Judaism among Christians or anti-Christian sentiment among Jews, but rather a shared mutual respect, as befits those who adore the one Creator and Lord and have a common father in faith, Abraham.”**

Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* – The Document of the Holy See, 16<sup>th</sup> March 1998 in *The Holocaust, Never to be Forgotten*, ed. Avery Dulles and Leon Klenicki (Paulist, New Jersey, 2001), p. 21

As we build a new future, we would do well to remember that we all share the responsibility to ensure that history does not repeat itself. Evil always triumphs when good people do nothing. The German

Protestant pastor Martin Niemöller famously remarked:

**“First they came for the Communists,  
but I was not a Communist so I did not speak out.  
Then they came for the Socialists and the Trade Unionists,  
but I was neither, so I did not speak out.  
Then they came for the Jews,  
but I was not a Jew so I did not speak out.  
And when they came for me,  
there was no one left to speak out for me.”**

Based upon a speech to representatives of the Confessing Church in Frankfurt, 6<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

## **Churches Together in, Clifton, Cotham and Redland.**

### *Advance News about the Lent Programme for 2010*

Our Lent programme in previous years has attempted to focus on the essential Vision of Churches Together - that we should join together in study and prayer, concentrating on what **unites** us as Christians.

For Lent in 2010 we have chosen the study of Restorative Justice as our means of coming together in common purpose. Whilst Restorative Justice is not solely a Christian preserve it has an essential message that contains many of the kernels of truth contained in the New Testament. Thus the study may help us to reflect on how we live our Christian lives both as individuals and as groups.

In one respect preparation is deceptively easy. Restorative Justice can be typed into Google and at the pressure of your mouse there is available a wealth of relevant information. However it will help to

suggest that a general perception indicates **Restorative Justice** – in its broadest sense - is a belief that the response to conflict and harm between victim and perpetrator must be a positive process of healing, not revenge nor retaliation.

A more specific definition; **Restorative Justice** aims to restore the well being of victims, communities and offenders damaged by crime to prevent further offending

During these 4 Lenten sessions there will emerge a pattern of learning and discussion led by distinguished leaders in their field. This will provide encouragement to grasp the essential aspects of our subject, to internalise and utilize this in our daily lives and in our relationships with others.

**All events in the programme begin with coffee from 7.00 and start at 7.30pm.**

<b>February 24</b>	Tyndale Baptist Church, Whiteladies Road Marion Lieberman – Introducing Restorative Justice
<b>February 26</b>	<i>Broadcast of the play “After the Accident” - A moving play about RJ, performed recently at the Alma Theatre</i>
<b>March 3</b>	Clifton Cathedral, Pembroke Road – Lindy Wootton – Restoration Justice in operation locally
<b>March 10</b>	All Saints Church, Pembroke Road – Tim Newell Restorative Justice – a wider perspective
<b>March 17</b>	Clifton Cathedral – Julian Armistead –

# **“Celebrating The Bible”**

***ALL SAINTS LENT COURSE - led by Fr Paul Spilsbury Every  
Tuesday from 23 February***

- ***Simple Lenten Eucharist*** in church at 7.30 pm for those able to attend first
- ***Coffee*** served at 8.00 pm (Parish Room)
- ***Presentation & Discussion*** begins at 8.10 pm
- ***Night Prayer (Compline)*** at 9.20 pm said simply in the Parish Room for those who can stay

<b>23 February</b>	<b>“The Bible – What Is It?”</b> <i>God’s Word and human words</i>
<b>2 March</b>	<b>“Bible Beginnings”</b> <i>Genesis and all that</i>
<b>9 March</b>	<b>“Flawed People”</b> <i>Kings and prophets</i>
<b>16 March</b>	<b>“New Hope”</b> <i>Exile and after</i>
<b>23 March</b>	<b>“Hope Fulfilled”</b> <i>Christ for everyone</i>

***For those unable to attend on Tuesday evenings:***

***Thursday afternoons - Informal Home Group  
Weekly from 25 February – parallel course on  
“Celebrating The Bible”***

***2.30 pm at 15 Upper Belgrave Road - ending with tea!  
(home of Beryl Bank - Flat 3 - stairlift)  
All welcome – please let Beryl know you are coming***

**SUNDAYS IN LENT**      *“Celebrating The Faith”*

***Sermons at 11.00 am Solemn Mass***

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|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>21 February</b> | <b>Celebrating Faith</b>      | <b>Fr Paul Spilsbury</b> |
| <b>28 February</b> | <b>Celebrating Prayer</b>     | <b>Fr Richard Hoyal</b>  |
| <b>7 March</b>     | <b>Celebrating Word</b>       | <b>Fr James Patrick</b>  |
| <b>14 March</b>    | <b>Celebrating Church</b>     | <b>Fr Brendan Clover</b> |
| <b>21 March</b>    | <b>Celebrating Sacraments</b> | <b>Fr Richard Hoyal</b>  |

***Addresses at 6.00 pm***      ***“Something Wonderful for God”***  
***Brief sermons on things our preachers have found heartlifting.***

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**STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

***Praying round the Passion carvings at church***  
***Friday at 6.45 pm (weekly from 19 February)***

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**CONCERT OF MUSIC FOR LENT**

**7.30 pm Saturday 6 March at All Saints**

***Armonia Apprezzata directed by Tom Williams***

We are delighted to welcome back this excellent young vocal ensemble for a programme which includes Domenico Scarlatti’s moving *Stabat Mater* and other choral masterpieces for Lent.

***Tickets: £7 at the door***

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***Come and Sing Sir John Stainer's***

**'THE CRUCIFIXION'**

**Passion Sunday 21 March at 6.00 pm (NB)**

**with Ian Yemm *tenor* and Jeremy Watkins *baritone***

**Join us for a performance of this ever-popular and dramatic setting of the passion story. Choral rehearsal 4.30 pm on the afternoon, with copies available. Details from John Davenport.**

**Admission free – retiring collection**

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**ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD TO  
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

**Thursday 25 March      7.30 am Mass**

**7.30 pm SOLEMN MASS**

**Guest Preacher: Fr Graham Oakes**

**PEACE MEAL**

# ALL SAINTS CLIFTON YOUTH FESTIVAL

and

## SOLEMN EUCHARIST

An ecumenical day for young people 11 - 19

Music by **CJM** on vocals, guitars and drums

[www.cjmmusic.co.uk](http://www.cjmmusic.co.uk)

**Saturday 15 MAY 2010**

Music and Dance Workshops 11 – 1, 2 – 4 (refreshments available, BYO lunch)

Celebration with Hog Roast afterwards (Tickets free to participants; £5 to those attending only the Mass and the Party)

To register for the workshops, to request tickets for the Party and for further information please email the Co-ordinator Anne Bradley [allsaintsalive@live.co.uk](mailto:allsaintsalive@live.co.uk) The £1 registration fee will go to help earthquake relief in Haiti.

**ALL SAINTS CLIFTON, PEMBROKE ROAD, BRISTOL**

*(Church of England in the Catholic tradition)*

[www.allsaintsclifton.org](http://www.allsaintsclifton.org)

**ALL SAINTS ALIVE!**

## News from our link diocese in Uganda

December 15 & 16 2009

It is always wise to have someone local with you when you try to find a bus at a Ugandan bus park.

You may find the name you are looking for on a bus or a minibus, but that doesn't guarantee that it will be going within the next hour and a half if it isn't full.

This morning I left Gulu for Kitgum which is in a remote part of the country, near Sudan. My visit is in part to see for myself the 40-foot container which had left Nailsea school months before, crammed with furniture, computers, books, footballs etc. on a long journey by sea and land to a needy part of a link diocese.

Its journey has become a prolonged saga. Tomorrow I hope to see that it has arrived safely.

A seat in the front of the bus; 'for the Mzungu' can be a doubtful privilege. Space is tight, the gear box gets hot, and as ever you are surrounded by piles of luggage. An added extra on this journey was the text message I received just as the bus was leaving to inform me that British Airways staff had voted to strike over Christmas. So here I was travelling to the farthest point of my trip and unable to get back to Entebbe in time to get a plane before the strike. The thought of Christmas by myself in Kampala was not an enticing proposition! There was little I could do except savour the journey. I noticed how much change had come to this part of Uganda since the LRA had finally ceased harassing the population with abductions and ambush. The countryside showed signs of cultivation for the first time in 20 years as villages were being rebuilt.

The journey was uneventful; a few stops for roadside sellers to surround the bus. You can have anything at this time of year as long as it is mangoes; a 'comfort stop' (in the bushes); and my first sight of a monitor lizard ambling slowly across the dusty road.

We arrived more or less on time. I looked around for my host but he had

been delayed. I have learnt that something unexpected will usually happen to resolve the situation. This time I was taken by a stranger to the 'shop that sells everything'; a small store by the bus park owned by Lampton a key lay member of the local church. I spent an enjoyable hour, refreshed by a Coke and talking to the customers. My lift arrived was deposited in a modest hotel which had the advantage of being in the market place, so sitting on the verandah was never without interest. In the evening I was joined by diocesan staff for a tasty goat currie

The next day was container viewing day. It had been packed with such wealth of school equipment that opening it up had been like discovering an Alladin's cave. Most of the equipment was to be used by *The Rev Jabuloni Issoke Memorial College*. This is run by the Diocese of Kitgum to provide secondary education for those who would not otherwise be able to afford it; many are orphans or in child headed families, the result of year's of conflict. I spent an rewarding time with representatives of school who had interrupted their Christmas holiday; students, teacher ancillary staff, and governors. Most of the furniture had been unpacked and some was being used at the time of my visit by members of a day workshop. The books were being sorted to be used appropriately. Everything had survived the epic journey. After a tour of the school we reached the container which fitted in remarkably comfortably in its surroundings near the Cathedral and next to the Counselling Centre built with funds from Bristol. Photographs were taken and we were joined by Salome and the Child Care staff in the Counselling Centre before eating together.

It was agreed that this is probably now one of the best equipped schools in the North of Uganda. and there is immense gratitude for all we have been able to do through this imaginative project.

## **December 20th Consecration Day of a new bishop of Northern Uganda**

St Philip's Cathedral Gulu was abuzz with preparations for many days before the big event.

An outdoor podium was reconstructed; the Cathedral roof was painted the surrounding houses were spruced up and a lot of garden tidying took place so that all would match the splendour of the occasion.

As I sat by the Cathedral one day in the evening sun I listened to the choirs rehearsing local songs in distinctive African harmony. The Halleluiahs reminded me of the visit to Fort Portal earlier in the year

The day before the big event there was a rehearsal of Bishops so I saw some old friends of the Bristol Diocese. Last minute preparations were very much in evidence. A platform was still being constructed with concrete. One of the best sights of that day was the tired builder who relaxed into the wheelbarrow to have a nap between loads of concrete mixing.

Awnings were constructed. Lorry loads of singing parishioners arrived from distant parts.

The new Bishop's house and compound filled up with excited friends from his parish of Bugalobi in Kampala. I came across a bus load who needed directions and was greeted with whoops of gratitude when I told them I would be their guide

At night security forces made preparations for the attendance of the President.

In the evening I became the Bishop's chaplain's chaplain accompanying Willy Akena to see that all was well. We found some visitors with no place to stay so we took them on a very bumpy road to the University retreat house where we also met Johnson Gakumba the new Bishop. On our return we negotiated security checks to visit the Bishop's compound to see that all was well. Groups of women were preparing chickens for cooking by large wood fires behind the house. Many thousand were expected so catering was a big undertaking. Finally we got to bed about midnight, listening to the singing of the visitors in the distance at Gulu High School, their hostel for the night.

Next morning was an early start. The first call was to pick up the Bishop

suit which he had left behind. His house was bustling with people preparing for the great event. A memorable sight of the morning was Bishop's 6 year old daughter dancing around on the verandah in her pink and purple satin dress. The suit was found and delivered. On the way I found myself walking past two newly slaughtered goats and a pot of chicken's insides. No anonymous supermarket meat here!

As promised we picked up the Bishop and his wife Christine an hour later, but because of security we could not easily get to the Cathedral despite insisting that we had the main person of the day with us. I was given the Bishop's two sets of robes to carry. The tricky bit came when we went through the security scanner, and I had no hands free to take the money out of my pocket. The scanner alarm went off, I was barred from going further but with great difficulty I persuaded them that I was a threat to the President.

At last we delivered the Bishop Elect to the Archbishop, and I was relieved of any more responsibility.

A grand procession of Bishops started the service as we sang 'O Worship the King.'

At one stage the fire brigade arrived to dampen down the ground where the President would walk. The new Bishop changed robes twice, The outgoing Bishop, Nelson gave an excellent resume of what he hoped had achieved, There were many greetings, and stunning dancing of the traditional Royal Welcome by young people from Pader. The new Bishop gave his Charge, M.P's and local leaders spoke. The congregation received Communion. The President arrived to make his own speech

Five and a half hours after the service began the New Bishop gave the blessing and it was time for food. A nice biblical number (about 5,000) were more than adequately fed. Crates of 'soda' were drunk. Many danced. The young people in traditional dress gave us more demonstrations of their talent. All agreed it had been a great day.

Late in the evening as I shared a family supper with Willy (the Bishop's Chaplain) we could hear the women's groups entertaining the new

Bishop and his wife. Prayers are greatly needed for them both as they set about the task of guiding a diocese through the difficult stages of peace after two decades of rebel fighting when 1.8 million were displaced and 24,000 young people were abducted. It has already been discovered that the problems of a new peace can be as complicated as an old war.

Please support them with your prayers.

Stuart Taylor

## **Lectures and educational opportunities**

### **1. Bristol School of Christian Studies (BSOCS) meeting:**

Date: Tuesday 2nd Feb at 7.30pm

Place: Woodlands Christian Centre, Belgrave Rd , Clifton , Bristol  
BS8 2AA

Speaker: The Revd Dr Ernest Lucas, Bristol Baptist College

Topic: ?Why should Christians bother with the Old Testament??

This is an overview of the Old Testament and the riches it offers every Christian.

### **2. Trinity College hosting the new multimedia ?Test of Faith? tour:**

Time: Weds 10th March at 7.30pm

Place: Trinity College , Stoke Hill, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1JP

Speaker: Dr Ard Louis, University of Oxford

Topic: This is a resource developed by the Faraday Institute which deals with science/faith issues. 'Test of Faith' is a new multimedia overview of science/faith issues, including interviews with leading Christian scientists. The general issue of the compatibility of science and faith are tackled, and specific topics such as the randomness of evolution are tackled, and chance and free will.

### **3. Christians in Science Bristol talk:**

Time: Friday 19th March at 8pm

Place: Randall Room , All Saints Church, Pembroke Rd , Clifton , Bristol BS8 2HY (same as our meeting in November)

Speaker: The Revd Dr Ernest Lucas, Bristol Baptist College

Topic: 'Are Evolution and Genesis 1-3 Compatible?'

This talk will address the principles of interpretation of the first three chapters of Genesis and cover such issues as death before the Fall and the historicity of Adam and Eve.

## **From the Bishop**

### **Seeking the God who breathes life**

**This month Bishop Lee shares a call to mark Lent 2010 by attentiveness to God in prayer and fasting which has come through our deanery leadership.**

As someone deeply committed to our strategic planning and our programme for growth, there is something I recognise all too well. Without a move of God's Spirit in this Diocese it will go nowhere. We can do all in our power to encourage a climate for growth, to foster and to promote it, but in the end we are reliant on God.

In that graphic scene described in Ezekiel chapter 37 we hear how the prophet was taken into a valley filled with dry and dusty bones and told to speak to them in God's name. To his amazement the scattered bones began to gather together – forming skeletons, developing flesh and sinews, tissues and skin. There right in

front of Ezekiel a vast army was formed from those bones of the people of God. Except they were still lying in the dust – dead or as good as! God needed to breathe fresh life into them.

Across the parishes and deaneries of the Diocese, through our chaplaincies, councils, boards and synods we have made plans for growth – and we believe these have been prompted and led by the Spirit of God. We have been encouraged by what has been emerging – especially whenever it feels like dry and dusty bones have been given flesh and sinew. But as for Ezekiel in his day, God is teaching us to recognise this is his work and to be more conscious of our dependence on his activity. For he is the One who gives growth, his is the breath which animates our hopes and plans, and his is the energy we want to see increasingly released in people's lives across our churches and communities.

I hear the Spirit saying this to us in the proposal that has emerged through our deanery leadership that we should make Lent 2010 a time marked out by prayer and fasting. As Richard Foster says prayer is life creating and life changing – it takes us onto the frontier of spiritual life. Prayer, as Bishop Mike wrote last year in the Cycle of Prayer, is the lifeblood of our relationship with God and that holds for us both personally and corporately. We are to seek God in prayer together and also in private, through listening as well as petitioning. Prayer keeps us ever mindful of what God has done and is doing now and increases our trust and obedience to Jesus Christ.

Fasting – traditionally going without food in order to focus our attentiveness to God – is a spiritual discipline which underlines the seriousness of our devotion and discipleship. It is a practice which builds spiritual strength and stamina, yet it is one which has largely been neglected by us as the body of Christ.

The message coming from our deanery leaders is that if we truly want to see the energy of the whole people of God released in this Diocese then prayer and fasting ought to be at the top of our shared agenda for discipleship this Lent. Bishop Mike and I very much hope you will join with us in responding to this call.

+Lee

## From the Bishop of Ebbsfleet

### Anglo-Catholics & the See of Peter

**ANGLO-CATHOLIC** is one of those labels which proves so tricky to define. It nearly always gets changed to 'high church' by the media, who mean by it people who like 'smells and bells', 'fancy' worship rather than 'plain' worship. The first people to use the term, however, the 'Tractarians', were not especially interested in bells, and would certainly not have burned incense. Back in 1838, the first use of the term in

English, the emphasis was on the continuity of the Church of England with the Church of apostolic times. The Church, the Tractarians said, was a divine society and not an instrument of the state. The ministry of the Church and her sacraments were holy, catholic, and apostolic.

There was an early division among the Tractarians, what was called a 'parting of friends'. Some, notably John Henry Newman, were led by their theological explorations to become Roman Catholics. Others, notably John Keble and Edward Bouverie Pusey, took refuge in the 'Branch Theory', the idea that Rome, Constantinople (the Orthodox), and Canterbury were all ancient churches, sharing the ministry of bishop, priest, and deacon, descended from the apostles, and the sacraments, ordained by Christ. Tragically divided, in human terms, these 'branches', the Anglo-Catholics said, were nonetheless branches of the One Vine, in a way that Methodists and Baptists, say, were not (because they have no bishops and a different view of sacraments).

Throughout the twentieth century there was a continuing exploration of what it might take for the main 'branches' to recognise one another. Rome have talked to the Orthodox. Anglicans have talked to Rome, and to the Orthodox. In addition there have been extensive dialogues and conversations with churches of the Reformation, what we tend to call 'nonconformists'. Since 1966, when Archbishop Michael Ramsey and Pope Paul VI met in Rome, there has been particular enthusiasm for ARCIC – the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission – and we were never more optimistic about reunion in the West than in 1982, when Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Robert Runcie knelt together to pray in Canterbury Cathedral. In 1995 the Pope issued an Encyclical Letter, *Ut Unum Sint* ('That they may all be one' [John 17]), inviting Christians separated from Rome to explain just what they required to change before they were re-united with the Holy See.

The latest initiative, *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, this year, is yet another invitation from the Holy See to Anglicans to return in groups. Our day of prayer on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, the Chair of Peter, is our opportunity to think about this, in the company of Our Lord himself, and, where possible, with Roman Catholics. It is not a day of decision but a day of prayer. Though it is addressed to Anglicans in general, the particular focus of *Anglicanorum Coetibus* is, of course, Anglo-Catholics. We are the ones who have longed for the re-union of the Catholic Church. We are the ones who, with candles, and devotions, and incense, and music, and prayers, and vestments have got as close as we can to Roman Catholic practice. That's the 'high church' bit. More important, we are the ones who in matters of faith and morals – what we believe about the Gospel,

the Creeds, the Ministry, and the Sacraments - and how we live – have always claimed to be 'Catholic'. Do we mean it? And, if we do, what do we do about it? Individually and in groups. That's what we are saying our prayers about.

May the prayers of Our Lady of Walsingham, St Therese and John Henry Newman assist us as we seek to discover and build unity in the Church of Jesus Christ.

+ Andrew Ebbsfleet