

“Serving the people and their parishes”
PARSON AND PARISH
is published by
THE ENGLISH CLERGY ASSOCIATION

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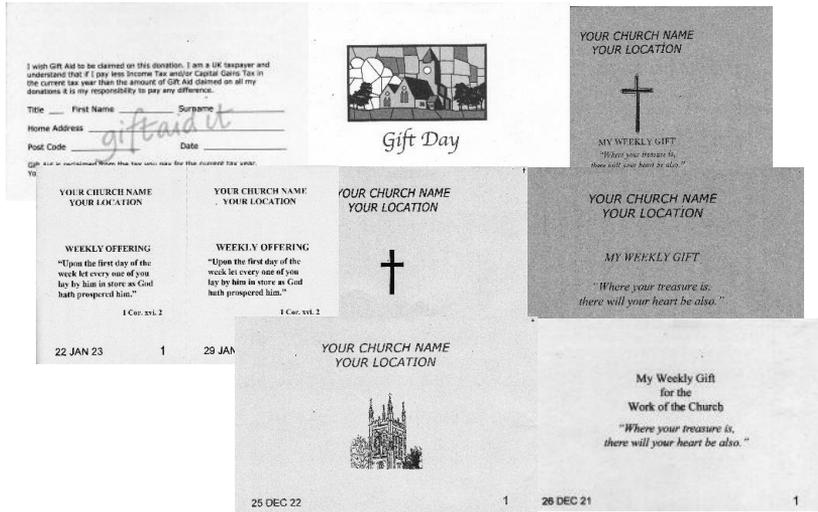
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FROM THE EDITOR

What a year it's been! I know I said something similar in last year's editorial piece, but 2021 has been, quite simply, a real roller coaster of a year. Amongst many other things, I've been catching up with postponed weddings (twice and sometime three times postponed!) as well as getting to grips with the new marriage registration procedures. I've also been advising families on anguished questions about whether or not it's too late to be holding memorial services for loved ones whose funerals and burials took place during the Pandemic. And, once again, meetings in person and interpreting national Church guidance with regard to worship and many other aspects of Parish life – what a year!

Once again though I hope this edition of *Parson & Parish* reflects and captures something of the difficulties and challenges, as well as the joys and surprises, of this last year – in all their fullness. The Revd Ros Roberts has provided us with a wonderful snapshot of the Church of England at its most innovative and imaginative, as well as pastoral and supportive, and Bishop John's piece about rest and refreshment and reflection in the light of the pandemic will I'm sure be appreciated by all who read it, in whatever form of ministry they have been engaged over the last year.

No doubt the questions we've all been asking ourselves are probably similar and are doubtless to do with the future of the Church and what it holds post Covid-19, just as Ros, Guy Cole and I were discussing in Oxford in September in the Pub she mentions. The lecture given by

the Archbishop of York at St Martin-in-the-Fields is clearly one very important response to these questions, and others, and I am grateful to the Archbishop for his permission to reproduce the lecture in this edition. Alongside our visions and dreams however is the reality of the "here and now", and the difficulties, including financial pressures, we've all been experiencing in the Church. How we, as clergy and laity in parishes across the country, and as members of Deaneries, Dioceses and the wider Church of England, tackle these issues will be incredibly important for generations to come.

Amongst other things of course a newly elected General Synod will soon be debating the Review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 (GS-2222) and, as a campaigning organization for parsons and parishes, I have included in this edition the response of the English Clergy Association to GS-2222, which was submitted to the appropriate Church authorities by the recent October deadline. We will all, I'm sure, be praying for the new Synod and its deliberations, and for the right decisions to be made in respect of our much loved and valued parochial system, which has stood the test of time and which, in spite of the closure of Church buildings, was not found wanting during the recent Pandemic.

The Revd Alec Brown
Editor.

AS WE ARE GATHERED - EVERY WHICH WAY JESUS IS HERE!

Imagine the scene - three friends, Vicars, in a pub chewing the cud about their experiences of the last eighteen months. As many clergy and laity have been doing around the country as church life has begun to get back to 'normal', or has it? If you were a fly on the wall listening in I suspect many of the topics of conversation would be similar.

'How have you coped?' Did you go Online or live-stream services?'

Online and live-streaming is all well and good but how do you keep in contact with those joining online services? That is the question.

I don't have all the answers and I am sure many of you will have done similar things as us, so I am not trying to say this is how you do it. All I can offer is what worked for our Four Parish rural benefice.

As the seriousness of the Covid- 19 pandemic became evident it was obvious that lockdown would come. I, like many, felt the rising tension about what all of us would face. When the announcement came, and with it the closure of churches, it brought a whole mixture of feelings and emotions. The cold dread of how bad this could, and would, be. The anxiety of the impact Covid would have on so many aspects of life and death. Dealing with the anger, vulnerability and anxiety in our communities and congregations as the one place where they could find peace, space, solace and prayer seemed to be taken away in an instant.

The question then becomes - how do we

do and be Church when the building is shut?

Many people were already self-isolating and one of the first things was to work with the village communities to set up help and support for them.

Mothering Sunday, the day before lockdown, was looking very different as I recorded the service using my phone. Three of the villages decided to "flower bomb" parishioners, with herculean effort posies were made for every house and distributed over the weekend, along with a short message of blessing and saying that the church members would be praying for them and providing contact details if they would like specific prayer or to talk. There were many positive responses, and those who did were asked if they would like to go on the telephone support, which meant that a member of the congregation would ring each week to catch up, prayer was offered but not pushed. This worked well and has continued throughout and is now "morphing" into new activities.

It was in those early days that for me the question - how do we do and be Church when the building is shut - changed to: What does God want his Church to do and be in a pandemic?

Prayer – first and foremost everything had to be rooted and immersed in prayer. An across benefice group would meet for morning prayer on Zoom. It built friendship and became a space for sharing ideas and concerns. Our buildings might be closed but our churchyards were open and became places of prayer

and pilgrimage with each having an area set aside for this. We know that they were and still are being used but feedback and keeping in touch with those who use them is sporadic.

Rural wi-fi and broadband were a problem, but I experimented with filming clips in the churchyard, encouraging visitors to place a stone in prayer on the cairn, and using the Celtic caim (circle prayer), or a short "thought for the day" which were then posted on the village and Church Facebook pages.

It quickly became obvious that the only stable broadband was in the Vicarage, and after repeated problems trying to upload recorded services, I took the plunge. On Easter Sunday, using my phone, I did the first live-streamed service. The service was advertised widely on Facebook, emails, and the weekly electronic newsletter. The response was amazing. Regular church members joined as well as their extended family members and friends from near and as far as Australia. That's all well and good but how do you keep in contact, and again it was social media and any other method we could think of.

Every week the service sheet and newsletter were prepared, which included the words to the hymns and the readings. These were uploaded with the service notifications.

During the service I would encourage those joining to comment, although I couldn't see them on the phone during the service, I also encouraged them to reply to each other. Within a few weeks

this had become a small community. After the service I took time to reply to all the messages and comments that had been left. From that in between services people would phone each other. Something that seems small but had a big impact on people feeling included was inviting different people each week to do the readings and intercessions. One person taught herself to record them and then, through detailed instructions and talking others through it on the phone, taught everyone how to do it. This meant that everyone did something. The wonderful thing was seeing and hearing how this helped different people feel part of the whole and hearing the ways in which their faith and relationship with God was growing. One notable service was international with readers joining from France and intercessors from Australia. During Lent 100 "Lent in a Bag" were sent out to regular churchgoers and those on the fringe of church and those self-isolating, and each week the symbol in the bag, which was related to readings, was used in the service in various ways.

We are fortunate to have a Junior School and were able to keep in contact with the school families through the School, including zoom assemblies, recorded Bible stories and Christingle in a Bag linking to a Christingle zoom service.

We have kept in touch with bereaved families.

Other things the churches did were to use their porches, especially for festivals. At All Souls' the porches were decorated, the names to be remembered were displayed and LED night lights left (along

with hand sanitizer) for people to come and light, along with links to the online Light a Candle. Remembrance Sunday Service was live-streamed from one of the War Memorials. From Advent to Christmas we had outdoor cribs and the trees were put outside church with wooden baubles for people to come to write a prayer, remember a loved one, to express a hope or a wish. We let the villagers know that I or one of the congregation would go at a specific time each week and pray for the things written on the baubles, and by Christmas this was quite a task, albeit a profoundly moving and privileged one.

Over the last 18 months we have seen God dwelling and working in ourselves and in others more, people feel comfortable taking part in services, and there has definitely been a growth in faith and fellowship, with one person called to train as an Anna Chaplain, bringing a new ministry and Messy vintage to a new congregation.

Even with only being able to live-stream from two churches we are continuing with this and have a small core of regular people joining.

Not everything has carried on, and there are not large numbers of people returning to church or coming for the first time. That sometimes feels hard but we are four small rural parishes with limited resources and we did what felt right and what we felt able to do with God's blessing.

Keeping in touch remains a challenge and will continue to do so, but we know God is good, all the time. All the time,

God is good.

While these many and various efforts and initiatives, as described above, haven't visibly had big effects people do know the church was always, and still is always, there for them, and that God is present with them.

*The Revd Ros Roberts
The Benefice of Lenborough with Adstock,
Gawcott, Hillesden and Padbury
Diocese of Oxford.*

WHAT NOW IN MINISTRY?

For a recent retreat I was having to think through some of the possible ways clergy might come out of the pandemic with tangible gains. I came up with the usual 'clever' titles. You know the kind of thing: Redeeming Time, Creating Space, Encouraging Joy, Embracing Personal Growth. But I meant them. You'd have to ask the participants on the retreat if it meant anything to them too.

Redeeming Time. I wanted to explore a number of different biblical approaches to time. Circular time is seen in the regularity of the seasons and of the Church's year, but as we come out of the pandemic we might reflect on the value of refreshing our conventional practices (taking baptisms, weddings, Sunday morning worship) rather than just repeating them. You can take the same baptism twenty times or offer twenty different baptisms. Linear time was an innovation from the Judaeo-Christian tradition. History isn't arbitrary, it has direction, purpose, goals. That approach gives significance to our ministries, even urgency, but it can lead to an undue focus on delivery and on cramming more and more into our ridiculously crowded diaries. Time isn't running out; it arrives as always, simply one moment at a time. Kairos time is of course God's time, God's special moment – if we'll recognise it. Covid is a kind of kairos for the Church and for us; perhaps we can re-set our compass in ministry, remembering that it's not about our performance as religious functionaries; it's actually all about God, our holy fascination, our magnificent obsession.

The Church has a fourth approach to time: Ordinary time. This is time lived in recovery and in the flow of the present moment. We all have 86,400 seconds each day to spend as we decide but we mustn't just be driven by demands, rather we need ministries of prayer, reflection and action-in-response. Ministry is an overflow of the abundance of the heart, so the heart has to be fed and watered. Let's not be apologetic about time spent in prayer and reading! The jar of our ministry can be filled up with sand, or we can put in the big stones first and then let the sand fill in the rest. Ministry can be lost in a blizzard of details or we can choose the crucial content first.

Creating space. I was thinking here, post-Covid, about Outer Space (creating space in our on-going lives) and Inner Space (creating space for God.) In that outer space I had a few questions. Do you have a place of your own, a happy place where you relax and are nourished? A favourite walk, a veg patch, a holiday place, a shed, a chair. Even in our imagination we need to go there often when we're under stress. Another question: do you give yourself regular treats? I used to plan one a month – a trip to the theatre, a meal out, a day with friends. And I reckoned never to be more than ten weeks from a break (work it out!). What about hobbies, another form of 'outer space' that takes us away from the pressures of ministry? And who is in your outer space with you, that is, who is your nurturing person, your protective person, and your wise person? We need them.

Inner space is also essential if we're to be sustained in long-term ministry. Covid might have broken our prayer pattern or sent us more seriously to our prayers. The key for me, I realised, is stillness. To cope with change or crisis we need more stillness with God to subvert the anxious responses we easily fall into. The cacophony of our lives and the constant chatter in our heads need to be stilled so that we have a chance of encountering God and not just talking at God. I may be wrong but I suspect there can be a tendency to see Morning Prayer (say) as a bit of a tick-box event – 'done that, on with the day.' What we actually need in our practice of prayer is a time of sufficient focus and intensity that it overflows into the rest of the day so that the day is soaked with the presence of God, whatever the awkward tasks, the long meetings, the demanding conversations. That way we go out from Morning Prayer to **be** the prayer, to embody it.

I think one of the realisations 'after Covid' (if such it is) is that we need ways of prayer that are more about resting, waiting and desiring, more about abiding. TS Eliot wrote in East Coker that 'we must be still and still moving into another intensity, for a further union, a deeper communion.' As Augustine wrote, we need to 'take our chalice to the fountain to be filled.'

Encouraging Joy. Joy is one of my favourite subjects! A priest on a retreat I was on once said, 'Never let the sorrows of this world hide from you the joy of Christ risen.' I've tried to live with that. Joy of course is different from happiness (which results from 'happenings'). Joy has proper roots because we're made

to share in the joyful life of the Trinity, to participate in the life of God. And the resurrection is the 'seal' on our trinitarian lives. As Tolkien said, the resurrection is 'a joy beyond the walls of the world.' He added that it's also 'poignant as grief.' Joy has a strangely symbiotic relationship with sorrow. In the midst of fear and anxiety (such as we've experienced in the pandemic) joy can sometimes streak through the grey landscape straight from the presence of God. We'll all have had that experience sometime with terminally ill parishioners; laughter bubbles out and close fellowship - and something akin to joy.

Joy is of course fundamentally a response to God's gift, not something we manufacture. But 'response' can become 'responsibility'; a discipline of joy. Put resurrection at the heart of ministry and joy becomes a homing signal to keep us on track. Then we can make it a discipline always to look for signs of resurrection life, of the Kingdom. We can make it a discipline to smile; it's lovely to see how often we get smiles back! We can make it a discipline to be a positive, hopeful encourager. It can even be a discipline to watch comedies and to laugh; sometimes I realise sadly that it's been a long time since I laughed properly. Nietzsche said he would take Jesus more seriously if his followers looked more redeemed!

Embracing Personal Growth. When there's been a major dislocation in our ministry such as Covid it can be a good time to look back at our spiritual journey and see God's hand in it as well as where we seem to be going. There are lots of templates for that overview but I prefer

the image of sight, as John's gospel in particular uses it. So I start thinking about **first sight**, how I first became aware of the love of God. For me it was realising that the picture on the lid of the mystical jigsaw was of Jesus, and this one-dimensional, tame figure became vibrant, passionate and fascinating. First sight will always be precious to us but it carries the danger of trapping us in a small space, limited by the practices and customs, the theology and worship, of our first experiences.

Second sight is the gradual maturing of our faith as we come to glimpse the richness and immensity of spiritual wisdom before us. New language and ideas, new ways to pray, new paths to explore – it's all very exciting and hopefully goes on for a long time. Eventually, however, we might well find that things go wrong, the excitement fades, God goes quiet, prayer is a chore, worship is (dare we admit?) boring. We even wonder if God is really there. What we need then is **night sight**, a determination to see in the dark. There is much we can do in this period but above all it's a time not to panic but to hunker down, wait, be patient, talk with a wise friend, read, edge our way into new things. Eventually, hopefully, we come to **insight**, a time of new, deeper conviction probably of fewer things, but a quieter, humbler, more modest faith that's inclusive rather than binary, more at ease with mystery and paradox, and finds God in all things. We're more relaxed with ourselves and our faith, more accepting of others and their views, more able to see the complexities of life through a wide-angle lens. Faith is deeply

integrated into our lives. There may be a stage beyond this which is simply 'out of sight,' but it's the domain of the saints and beyond my pay-grade. It's the realm of vision rather than sight. George Herbert's poem 'Prayer' seems to touch it pretty well.

So how is the journey for each of us? Where have we found ourselves? If we're to be of use to God and the good people with whom we share faith, we need to attend to our faith-journey, be understanding of it, intentional about it and open to the God who desires for us 'not less than everything.' In season or out of season, in Covid or out of Covid, the journey goes on.

*+John Pritchard
Former Bishop of Oxford*

THE DREAM FOR THE CHURCH

St Martin in the Fields Lecture Series - 27 September 2021

The Archbishop of York gave the opening lecture at St Martin in the Fields in the Autumn Lecture Series – We Have a Dream. His speech follows in full...

The only really interesting thing about the Church is God, and God as God is revealed to us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is for us the human face of God; God coming to us and speaking to us in the language of a human life; and at the same time revealing to us, not only God, but what our humanity can and should be.

If this was a sermon, I am a preacher after all, I would have a text. From 2 Corinthians 5.17: "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"

That is the great hope of our life in Christ. A hope of transformation.

And what is the Church? Well here I am going to rather inelegantly paraphrase or misquote Rowan Williams where I once heard him say something like this, we are the ones who are being transformed by Christ in order to transform the world. We are this motley band of muddled humanity whose lives have been so impacted by what God has shown us and done for us in Jesus Christ that we have formed a community that is centred on Christ: and shaped by his teaching

and his presence; and resourced and sustained by that continuing ever present presence that we called the Holy Spirit; and nourished each day by the iron rations of scripture and sacrament, which are in the end probably the only things about church life that really matter (and that shape everything else) we are trying, not just to follow Jesus, but recognise our responsibility to the world and share with the world and every person in it the things that we have seen and received from Jesus. One very long sentence!

So when I speak about the mission of the church (which on the whole I try not to) what I'm really speaking about is the mission of God: God's great vision and desire to shape and transform the whole world around Christ; and what we call mission is our catching hold of God's vision and joining in as best we can. Therefore, my dream for the church is not really a dream at all. Rather, it is the hope that we can become the simpler, humbler, bolder church that the current vision statements of the Church of England encourage, reflecting the simplicity, humility and courage that we see in Christ.

A church absolutely centred on Christ will require a stripping back, a purging, of all those things that are not of Christ, for all the great spiritual writers say that the first step in the spiritual life is the unmasking of illusion.

I wonder whether this focus of the

church being centred on Christ, I wonder if we could have had such a focus were it not for the last 18 months of Covid, where our lives have been so stripped back, where we have been denied all the familiarities and the comforts of worship and fellowship, where we have had a Eucharistic fast for months and months. I found myself saying during the second or third lockdown that Lent seems to have been very long this year. It has been going on for over 12 months. But with this stripping back we have found the presence of Christ in a new and beautiful way and it is from that from which we build.

Simplicity in this sense – the natural gift of the child, the supernatural gift of the saint – is the refection of God. It was Ronald Knox who said that “There is only one being who is absolutely simple; that is almighty God, who knows everything.” He went on: “To be simple is to see things with the eyes of God, that is to see them as they are without trimmings.” This is what Jesus called purity of heart (see Matthew 5. 8). And it is the pure of heart who inherit the earth. This is the very big vision that flows from the deep well of our life in Christ.

I therefore dare to dream as we emerge from Covid that we might even be able to scrape the barnacles off the hull of the church and put out again into deep waters, recognising that our vocation, especially in the Church of England, is to be the church for everyone, or as one of my most famous predecessors famously put it: the one organisation which exists for the benefit of its non-members. Which is why the church that is centred

on Jesus Christ will also be shaped by Jesus Christ, and I dream every church, be it Westminster abbey, St Martin in the Fields, the tiniest village church in the tiniest hamlets rural Herefordshire has to offer, or hard-pressed, under resourced inner-city urban churches serving a glorious diversity of people, or some swinging from the chandeliers new wine fandango of a resource church, or a small gathering of young people meeting each week with a pioneer minister for a cup of coffee and hardly yet a church at all, but a little band of people who want to know Jesus more and see how his life can shape their lives and the life of the world, will make discipleship, apostolic and missionary discipleship the centre of their lives. Because from this everything else will flow.

I dream of a church where almost the first words that Saint Benedict wrote when he produced his rule might become central to the life of every parish church, chaplaincy, fresh expression or church plant: “We are going to establish a school for the service of the Lord.”¹ How would it be if that was true for every Christian Community?

And I too want to save the parish. But the best way to save the parish is to grow the Church. And the best way to grow the Church is to proclaim the gospel. And the best way to proclaim the gospel is to so live your life in Christ that the beauty and radiance that we see in Christ shines in our lives and makes a difference in the world; it is the pursuit of holiness and the transparent, transformative indwelling of Christ that will save the parish. Though we will need

to ensure that the necessary resources and back office functions of the Church are also focused to serve that same single purpose of making Christ known through his Church, that is through us – that motley band of muddled humanity whose lives have been so impacted by what God has shown us and done for us in Jesus Christ that they have formed a community that is centred on Christ: and trying to make a difference in the world. All this is happening in the life of our church at the moment and the things that are happening in the national church and reviews into effectiveness and governance are seeking to support it.

And I am dismayed (and the inheritor of a good many sleepless nights), aghast that somehow the things that I have been associated with which only want to support, uphold, build and sustain local church and parish church (and more of it) in all its manifold forms have somehow been interpreted as quite the opposite. And I reach out to those who have been troubled by some of the things they have heard centrally and say please let us join together as sisters and brothers in Christ for this single purpose of finding how we can best preserve, sustain and enable local church to flourish, and by local church I mean the parish church and priests and parishes and churchwardens overseeing a proliferation of other ministries and expressions of Christian community which will enable us to reach more people and shape the life of our nation and our world. That is my dream. And I am hugely encouraged by the many, many ways I see this lived out in the parishes I visit. I was in Bridlington

recently and was completely blown away by the service they were offering to their very deprived seaside community. A whole motley band of muddled humanity, I won't repeat it but making a difference.

And if I could include a plea as well as a dream: wouldn't it be good if we stopped talking about ourselves so much. If we become a church that is shaped by the five marks of mission then we would be crying out against the injustices of the world, asking the government to put back that twenty quid that has been lost on Universal Credit; losing patience with the lack of movement towards a green economy and pointing out the madness of spending millions on bombs when people starve, and shaping a world where love of neighbour and the common good is the place where we start to dream. And plan. The commissions that the Archbishop of Canterbury has led on for housing, racial justice, family life and social care will contribute massively to this national debate. I am honoured to be part of it. Our nation doesn't want to simply go back to how things were. We want a vision of hope. Hope for everyone, particularly in some of the left behind and neglected communities of the north where I now serve. Churches here are in the frontline. Our parishes and chaplaincies are lifelines of hope. I dream of a church where the hope we have in Christ inspires our nation and our world. In this past year, so many churches have experienced growth through two things: worship and service. It has been unexpected and counter intuitive. It wasn't led from the centre, though much is being done to align resources with this

flourishing of ministry.

But there has been a huge development of online services of one sort or another. New congregations have been established. New people have been drawn into the life of the Church. At the same time, churches have been in the forefront of working with others to alleviate suffering, be it debt relief, food poverty, homelessness or just those acts of kindness such as collecting the prescription for an isolated person. This gives us confidence to dream and develop that narrative of hope where we invite people to live their lives in Christ through the worship and companionship of the church and demonstrate in our communities what that life in Christ looks like, measured by the number of feet we wash.

Therefore, although I'm hugely relieved to now be meeting again in person, I believe that one of the ways we will best shape the life of our nation and grow the church is through developing a presence in all the places where people actually live their lives – a worshipping presence and a serving presence – and this isn't just the home and the neighbourhood, but also in education, at work and leisure, and in people's online as well as their off-line lives.

The real meaning behind the phrase you may have heard in the Church of England at the moment mixed ecology church, is not abandoning or dismantling one way of being the church in order to develop another, but taking hold of the historic vocation of the Church of England to be the church for everyone everywhere,

and pay greater attention to the different ways and the different places in which people actually live, then grow the church accordingly. It is about adapting to the challenge of changed circumstances, that is the best way for anything to grow. The history of Christian mission has been the history of such cultural adaptation. The gospel doesn't change. But the languages in which it is translated do. And the refining fire of the questions that different cultures pose reveal to us new depths and new truths within that gospel. Isn't this also the very moving and inspiring vision behind Heartedge, a movement for mission and renewal, which emerged from this church?

Let me quote Billy Connolly who once said there is no such thing as bad weather, only the wrong clothes. It is no good, the Church complaining about the weather, saying things are against us in our culture, rather we need to find the right clothes and the right ways of reaching and serving people in all the many places that they live their lives. All this will be led by bishops and priests who share a cure of souls, but will require a vision of ministry where, because of our baptism into Christ, ministry belongs to the whole people of God and where lay ministry flourishes under the oversight of the church. It is a generous catholic and apostolic vision, rooted in that inheritance of faith that we have received as the Church of England.

And I dream of a church that, like Peter just as he was about to receive a bit of an intellectual mauling by St Paul over the barrier breaking and epoch making changes that his mission to the Hellenistic

world had brought to the Church (at last discovering the new humanity in Christ where class and sexuality and gender and race no longer counted in quite the same way), was able to say from his close company with Christ, and despite his own many failings, 'do not forget the poor (see Galatians 2.10).'

I don't think there has ever been a moment of fundamental renewal in the life of the church without a bias to the poor. It will be the same for us today. After all what are we saving the parish for, if not the service of the world? But it won't just be parish. It will also be school and prison chaplains, and, I hope and pray, a renewal of the religious life. This is happening. I am hugely inspired by the young people I meet who are forming small Christian communities. I thank God for the more established communities such as the Society of St Francis (and others) who continue to work and serve in some of our poorest parishes. And isn't the real test of the government's levelling up agenda what it brings to the disconnected, the marginalised, those who lack opportunity, those who don't have access to the best of education, or often even a dentist.

And to do all this unity will be all important. A church of variety and diversity needs deep roots in its tradition, deep roots in Christ, Only then will it bear fruit. This is unity within the Church of England. But we must also strive for unity with all our sisters and brothers in Christ. I think we under estimate the damage our disunity does to our credibility and witness. If we are the one charge to preach a Gospel of reconciliation, how

come we are so unreconciled ourselves? Preaching on the text from Haggai 1:1-8, "Rebuild my House", In 2015 Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher to the Papal Household, memorably observed that in those "parts of the world where Christians are killed and churches torched, it is not because they are Catholic or Anglican or Pentecostal, but because they are Christians." He went on: "In our persecutors eyes we are already one. Let us be one also in our own eyes and in the eyes of God."

Now that is a dream worth pursuing. However, I am less and less confident that theologians and church leaders will achieve this unity, though the vital work of ecumenical dialogue must continue and has born some fruit. Unity will be achieved because it is the prayer and the heart's desire of all of us. St John tells us that on the cross not one bone of Jesus' body was broken. Yet in his body the church, we've broken every one. And we don't seem to mind that much. And the echo chambers of social media only distort and amplify our suspicions of each other.

Again, I believe it is our faithfulness to Christ and our rootedness in prayer that will bring unity, for the closer we get to Christ the closer we get to each other. When I was Bishop of Chelmsford, one of the best things I did was pray each month with other church leaders across Essex and East London, I think did more for unity than any amount of other meetings. And it over flowed into acts of joint service and witness. I intend to do the same in Yorkshire .And I encourage you and plead with you and all the church

to look for opportunities to pray together with other Christian denominations. This is how the world will come to believe.

Finally, I dream of a church that is younger and more diverse. The average age of people in our congregations is 61, that is twenty-one years older than the average age in the population. Many of our congregations don't look like the communities they serve. We need leadership in the church that is more diverse, inclusive and representative.

When I was a parish priest there were no children in church on the first Sunday morning. My wife was the youngest person in the congregation. I was the second youngest person. They were lovely people but they didn't really want a vicar, they wanted a hospice chaplain. The turning point for me and for them was recognising that things could change. But that change would only come about when that change came from all of us. And we started to become again a Church which looked outwards. I won't tell you the whole story of how those changes came about, that might be a subject for another lecture but on my final Sunday there were 30 or 40 children and a thriving youth group from which two members went on to be ordained. I will always remember this as being one of the most joyful parts of my ministry.

And when I was Bishop of Chelmsford as I looked round the table at my first staff meeting we were all white and nearly all male. And we together had to own the fact that this was holding back our mission, diminishing our leadership and not looking like the people we served.

Change is possible.

But these kind of changes are not driven by race politics nor helped by culture wars, but, again, arise out of our life in Christ. In Christ there is a new humanity (see Galatians 3. 27-29). The church is his body. The elbow can't say to the arm I don't need you (see 1 Corinthians 12. 12-27). At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit blesses diversity. The whole world doesn't speak one language. That's what I would have done if I was in charge but the Holy Spirit does the opposite. The church speaks every language. And the great biblical vision with which scripture concludes is about every tribe and every tongue and every nation being gathered before God (see Revelation 7.9).

So yes, I do dream that we will put more energy and resources into working with children and young people and schools and families and that we will find resources to combat racism, support racial justice and enable the church on Earth to look more like the church in heaven and serve those diverse communities that make up the smorgasbord of British life today and led by the spirit clothe the unchanging gospel in the ever-changing cultures and languages with which we have been called to speak the gospel and share the story of Christ.

It is a dream that inspires and sustains me. It is what gets me up in the morning. Its un-fulfilment, and our – my - stubborn resistance to the prophetic call of the Spirit of God, keeps me up at night.

Young men dream dreams, old men have visions, but much of the problem is that

often middle-aged men are in charge.

So let's include the young around the table, and may those of us who are not young and not yet that old, be brought to that purity of heart and poverty of spirit whereby we too are children of God.

The final chapter of my recent book, *Dear England* which I started writing thinking it would be a response to a world emerging from Brexit but was actually written during the lockdowns of Covid, ends with a beautiful poem by the French Roman Catholic thinker and poet, Charles Peguy. It's called *God's Dream*. It feels like a good place to conclude this lecture: not my dream for the church, not yours, but God's. It also feeds into my other dream, so well expressed by Mark Oakley, that we have more poetry than prose: "Poetry is the language of religious faith, and those of us in the Christian tradition need to reclaim this unapologetically at a time when shallow literalism is on the prowl."² I for one will be trying to woo people with the love song of the gospel. I'm not sure I actually know how to do much else.

Poetry is, supremely, the language of worship. It is therefore the language of heaven.

So, what is God's dream for God's church in God's world. This is what Peguy wrote

*I myself will dream a dream within you -
Good dreams come from me, you know -
My dreams seem impossible,
not too practical,
not for the cautious man or woman -
a little risky sometimes,*

*a trifle brash perhaps -
Some of my friends prefer
to rest more comfortably,
in sound asleep,
with visionless eyes -
But, from those who share my dreams
I ask a little patience,
a little humour,
some small courage,
and listening heart -
I will do the rest -
Then they will risk
and wonder at their daring -
Run - and marvel at this speed -
Build - and stand in awe at the beauty of their
building -
You will meet me often as you work -
in your companions, who share the risk
in your friends, who believe in you enough
to lend their own dreams
their own hands
their own hearts
to your building -
In the people who will stand in your doorway,
stay awhile,
and walk away knowing that they, too, can
find a dream.
There will be sun-filled days,
and sometimes it will rain -
a little variety -
both come from me.
So come now, be content
It is my dream you dream -
my house you build -
my caring you witness -
my love you share,
and this is the heart of the matter.*

• 1.The Rule of St Benedict

• 2.Mark Oakley, *The Splash of Words; Believing in Poetry*, Canterbury Press, 2016, Pg. Xxxiv

REVIEW OF THE MISSION AND PASTORAL MEASURE 2011 (GS-2222)

Response of the English Clergy Association

Introduction

The Church of England is unquestionably entering a period of considerable change. Diminishing resources, both human and financial, mean that it is thought necessary to look at structures and future ministry, including the role and provision of stipendiary clergy. The Church is currently engaged in formulating a vision and strategy for the 2020s and beyond. One of the outcomes is perceived to be a need for greater simplicity in the organisation of the Church, and to introduce greater flexibility in the way organisational structures may be changed. To this end there is currently a formal consultation as to the ways in which the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 might be changed to permit this to happen. The proposals are contained in General Synod Paper GS-2222. These include, for example, the creation of units other than the parish and the possible closure of churches. The English Clergy Association has taken part in the consultation and our response is contained below.

The English Clergy Association represents the interests of clergy of the Church of England and supports them with advice and information. We very much welcome the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing and all that it says about looking after the welfare of our clergy. Yet we are concerned that the changes suggested to the Mission and Pastoral Measure are a retrograde step and could

potentially undo much of the good work that the Covenant was intending to do by way of support and encouragement of our clergy in their ministry.

There is certainly a feeling by many clergy that over the years their ability to minister effectively has been diminished and their security and value compromised. The proposals contained in the consultation document GS-2222 both continue and accelerate this movement and are a cause for concern. Under the proposals, the rights of clergy as office holders to object to measures which affect their church buildings and parsonages, and the right to object to imposed changes of pastoral and missionary outreach within their parishes, would be infringed, while correspondingly greater powers are given to the bishop and the diocese. These are important and far-reaching proposals. It is clear from comments in the press that they have attracted a considerable degree of criticism. It is a pity that neither individual clergy nor their representatives on Diocesan or General Synod, or others concerned with clergy welfare and the wider issues that affect the Church, appear to have been consulted on the shape of these proposals prior to the document being laid before the General Synod, but only a very limited group of people. The overwhelming purpose, as well as freeing diocesan action from scrutiny and objection, seems to be to enable a vision of mission which is far from commanding universal support. It is

hoped therefore that this consultation will be a meaningful one and that the many representations are carefully considered so that this is not seen to be a done deal.

It is appreciated that the decline in the number of active worshippers in the Church of England, and a reduction in the resources available, both financial and human, means that some change is inevitable. Such change, however, must be carefully managed and must not be allowed to remove the balance and safeguards that are crucial to the effective mission of the Church. Change should be undertaken carefully and sensitively, and particular regard should be had as to the impact that such changes might have on those who are devoting their lives to the ministry of the Church. There seems to be an element of opportunism in forcing through rapid change at a time when the traditional parish system is particularly vulnerable and its clergy demoralised and seeking to recover from the many months of church closure and disruption caused by the Covid pandemic. Support and understanding, not radical change and redundancy, are required at this time.

Units of Mission

Christianity began as a city religion. In Gaul during the fourth and fifth centuries as a part of the evangelisation of the countryside, baptismal churches were established by the bishops in communities outside the city. Each had a parochia or parish separate from that of the diocese that constituted a territorial area for which it was responsible. Church

building proliferated throughout the Frankish Empire between the 7th and 10th centuries and smaller churches began to be built to serve villages and townships. Many landowners built churches on their estates, the beginning of the private church. Each came to possess a parochia in its own right with a responsibility for the care of those living within it, and the parish became the basic pastoral and administrative unit. In Anglo-Saxon England, the Church in the countryside was based on the great church or minster. It would appear that after the Conquest, the system of parishes prevalent on the continent was introduced into England, probably by Archbishop Lanfranc, and gave rise to the present system of parishes. The parish has served the Church in England well, both before and after the Reformation, for nearly a thousand years.

The impact of declining numbers and resources is most evident in the rural parishes, and it needs to be appreciated that town parishes and country parishes have their own distinct problems and benefits and may perhaps have to be dealt with differently. In the rural parish, there is very often the existence of a beautiful historic building that is costly to maintain by a dwindling number of worshippers. Nevertheless, in many rural communities, the parish church is actively supported by the whole community as 'their' church whether or not they are worshippers or indeed have any faith. It is so very important that a tangible link between the church and a local community is maintained. It is a prime mission of the Church that it

serves its local community with joy. It isn't all about getting bottoms on seats! To remove the parish as an area of care and concern for the local community would therefore be counter-productive and seriously affect the connection that only a local church can provide.

One of the key areas contained in these proposals concerns the Emerging Church. Paragraphs 19 to 39 of the Review seek to reduce rights and representation for questioning Emerging Church initiatives. The drift of such initiatives appears to be towards larger and more geographically remote units involving significantly fewer stipendiary clergy and more decision-making from the centre. This is despite the clear conclusion of the Church of England report *From Anecdote to Evidence*, which states 'the larger the number of churches in the amalgamation, the more likely they are to decline.' As the Revd Canon Angela Tilby has pointed out in her column in *The Church Times* (1st October 2021 and 8th October 2021), this trend away from stipendiary clergy ministering locally is not Anglican and is likely to axe many rural churches. Those bishops and others advocating such schemes (as recently in the Leicester diocese where the plan is to reduce stipendiary clergy by around 20%) and indeed the Review itself, make great play of how important the local parish is to the Church of England and claim it as a backbone and a glory. Yet, this is wholly inconsistent with the proposals contained in this Review.

The creation of structures of ministry based on large administrative areas

and the introduction of another layer of administration remote from the local communities, is untried and untested and fraught with danger. Such centralised forms of ministry would distance the Church further from the people it seeks to serve and would be counter-productive, particularly in rural communities. The nearest equivalent would perhaps be the Methodist Circuit system. This has hardly been a successful modern example with attendees declining by around 7,000 per week ([methodism_in_numbers_2020.pdf](#) ([methodist.org.uk](#))) and many chapels sold. We would contend that only through local churches being revitalised with the help and enthusiasm of local stipendiary clergy can new money be found. Instead of putting money into specialist ministry, any money available should resource the local parishes both in terms of personnel and grants for imaginative schemes.

The Closure of Churches

It follows, that in order to permit the creation of larger units of mission, one of the primary aims of the proposed changes to the MPM is to facilitate the closure of churches. While it is inevitable that some churches may have to be closed, the large numbers that have been suggested could be closed as a result of changes to the Measure would be seriously damaging to the Church of England. The Measure has been called a Church closer's charter in *The Spectator* (*The Church Closers' Charter must be torn up* | *The Spectator*) with the possibility of hundreds of churches being closed over the next few years with very few safeguards or representations.

The concerns of Friends of Friendless Churches can be seen here: Proposal to axe experts could affect hundreds of closures, warns church-rescuing charity (churchtimes.co.uk). Clergy as office holders and a corporation sole should have the right to object to proposals which affect their church buildings. Such buildings are in every sense local and those who are ministered to by the clergy as well as others with local concerns should be heard before any decisions are made as should those with a wider interest in historic buildings. The closure of churches must not therefore be made easier with reduced consultation and fewer checks in the process as contemplated by these changes, but must always be a last resort that involves genuine consultation in each case at grassroots level. Once churches have been closed and sold off, they have gone for all time. There is little doubt that when Dr Beeching closed so many local railways there was genuinely felt at the time to be a pressing urgency to save money, but his knee-jerk reaction to financial difficulties at the time has now been generally seen to have been a great mistake. We must learn from history. Nor must we allow our churches to be closed simply at the behest of the diocesan bishop with little or no meaningful consultation as occurs in the Roman Catholic Church. We agree with the words in a legal analysis of GS-2222 for the Save The Parish movement which states that 'The settlement put in place by the 1976 Endowments and Glebe Measure, which asset-stripped the parishes, and now requires ever increasing payments of the parish share,

is gradually sawing off the very branch on which we all sit.' (GS 2222 Analysis and response by STP, p. 14.) These mistakes of the past must not be allowed to be repeated where it becomes a case of realising valuable assets for a short-term gain that is not directed towards the true ongoing ministry of the Church.

There is no doubt that the financial difficulties that the Church of England finds itself in today is the driving force behind these proposed changes. The parish share has been the subject of much criticism. There is a widespread perception that money being paid by the parishes that could otherwise be devoted to worship, local needs and pastoral care, is being diverted into a big black hole. To some extent this is the fault of the dioceses and much greater effort and transparency is required to justify the use of these contributions and show how the money is being spent. It is a very difficult question as to how far those parishes that are successful in attracting large numbers (often gathered churches) should subsidise those churches where the congregation numbers are small. There is often opposition by some churches with very large attendances that they are being taxed through the parish share for being successful while those clergy with diminishing congregations feel that they are failing in their mission. But successful ministry is not all about attendance numbers. These are admittedly very difficult questions. Perhaps other possibilities might be explored, such as the creation of local community trusts to maintain the fabric of their historic church and thereby

relieve it of this financial burden which at times can be quite considerable.

Consultation

The Review notes the strength of pastoral reorganisation being a bottom-up process (para. 36). This is crucial, irrespective of whether it may take longer or be administratively inconvenient. Of course, directly interested parties such as PCCs and churchwardens must be consulted where a pastoral reorganisation will affect their church. In our view, it is also important that the wider community is also engaged in the consultation process. It is not a sustainable argument to limit the right of consultation simply because the number of such representations in the past has generally been low. In many cases, local communities continue to support their churches both financially and emotionally, whether or not they are actual worshippers. Parsonages were often provided by the parishioners and sometimes by the clergy themselves and are not diocesan assets. In the deliberations concerning the proposed reforms around the introduction of common tenure, it was conceded for this reason that ownership of parsonages should continue to be vested in the incumbent and not the diocese. The parishioners therefore have an interest both morally and in law in the church and the parsonage, and it follows that they have the right to be consulted in any pastoral reorganisation that may affect their church. If a church is truly to reach out to its local community, then it must engage with it in a matter so important as the continued existence of its local

church. We would therefore urge that their right to be consulted and to make representations should not be restricted. The MPM provides for consideration by the Commissioners of any representations made to them concerning a draft scheme or order with a power to amend the proposals. This provides an independent review body that can look again at any proposals made under the Measure. There is a further appeal to the Privy Council. The Review suggests that in place of the independent review provided by the MPCPC, the diocese should be given the responsibility for managing the processes around pastoral organisation, including the consideration of representations, which currently come to the Commissioners. Such a suggestion is wholly flawed insofar as the diocese is an interested party in the furtherance of the scheme, and therefore in a real sense this would be an appeal to itself and would constitute a flagrant breach of the rule of natural justice. We would support the view that clergy faced with dispossession should be able to go to an Employment Tribunal. At the very least the existing safeguards should be maintained – yet there is no commitment to this. Of course, disguised redundancy may be used, waiting for retirement or movement and then not filling the post. This has a corrosive effect on active clergy, making very difficult or impossible traditional stipendiary ordained ministry and pastoral care, and hastening decline.

Clergy Dispossession

A most important element in the ministry and service of the Church is that there should be a stipendiary priest who

is as local as possible to the people he or she serves. They are seen as part of the community and share the problems and aspirations of those living within the parish. The effect of the Covid pandemic has been mentioned in the Review. Interestingly, although anecdotal, there were many examples during the worst of the Covid 19 outbreak, where those churches more centrally based or gathered churches were unable to function, and the parish church was the only church offering regular worship and leadership within the community. The presence of a local incumbent also meant that in many cases the church took a leading role in the community giving support both practically and spiritually at the time when both were very much needed and appreciated. That surely is such an important part of ministry.

Paragraph 31 of GS-2222 rightly recognises the increasing and complex burden on clergy, many of whom now have multiple PCCs and compliance requirements. The conclusion of paragraph 32 that the diocese should be given more powers is not the solution, as a considerable number of these pressures in the past have come from the diocese. The suggested changes to the MPM would again create a shift of the decision-making process away from the localities and into the diocese.

It is inevitable that if churches are closed and more amalgamations take place to create larger areas of mission with fewer stipendiary clergy, clergy would have to be dispossessed and made redundant. Yet, these proposals designed to make it much easier for the

wholesale redundancy of clergy to save money or balance the books (as in the recent Leicester Diocese reorganisation) is to invite great injustice. As GS-2222 recognises in para. 118, this treatment of loyal and professional clergy, who have devoted their lives to parochial ministry, is a difficult area. Indeed, if made redundant, clergy would lose not only their post and their income but also their house, and family life would be completely disrupted including the occupation of the spouse. The compensation considered (a year's salary) is wholly inadequate. A more realistic figure would be at least five year's stipend at the rate which the diocese calculates the complete financial benefit to clergy, e.g. taking account of the value of the provided accommodation. A related unjust use of power unrecognised in GS-2222 means that clergy who may be made redundant are less likely to oppose such overall proposals because they fear if they do, they may be discriminated against in the future.

Selling Vicarages

We regret the way in which so many Vicarages have been sold and their proceeds acquired by the diocese for its day-to-day running costs and oppose making this even easier by abandoning the present procedures for objection. Once a Vicarage is gone it is very difficult for that parish ever to have a priest. Money for parsonages and vicarages was often raised locally and if they are sold the money should remain a local asset.

Patrons

Patronage goes back to the 12th century

as a part of the reforms of Pope Gregory VII to bring the private church under ecclesiastical control. As a result, the right of a patron to present to a living was made subject to the bishop's acceptance of the proposed candidate. By the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986, the parish representatives must also approve the offer to present. Where there is a patron in existence, therefore, the appointment to a living is a shared process, though ultimately if no agreement is forthcoming the bishop will have the final say. This ensures that there are checks and controls in the system and the proper scrutiny of any proposed candidate. Institutional patrons, such as the Prayer Book Society, are valuable in ensuring that the forms of worship and traditions of a particular parish will be maintained. Patrons can also give a voice to their church in times of difficulty. Private patrons may have commercial or management experience that can be offered to their church if required and advice on fundraising, etc. Patronage when properly used is a part of a three-way partnership which means that no one person, whether the bishop, patron or PCC, can determine the appointment of a candidate without there being a full and open discussion. The position of patrons has been considerably undermined by previous Measures, and these proposals would make further inroads into the role of the patron were the right to present be further restricted. This is tilting the balance too far in favour of the bishop so that this ceases to be an equal partnership. It is too easy for patronage to be seen as an inconvenience that might prevent the

bishop from introducing a particular candidate or further diocesan policy, and which therefore should more easily be dispensed with. To abandon patronage would be to lose a considerable resource of help and advice and further reduce the influence of the laity in the Church. It should also be remembered that the advowson, the right to present, is a secular piece of property, an 'incorporeal hereditament' as Lord Coke called it, and it is beyond the competence of the General Synod to interfere in the exercise of those rights without parliamentary legislation.

Conclusion

There is a need for proper statistical analysis and evidence-based policy instead of each diocesan bishop coming up with mission schemes which are often not properly thought through and have a potentially devastating effect upon the highly trained parochial clergy they should count themselves fortunate to have. We believe that it is time to use what resources are available, or may be made available through any economies that might be made, to support and encourage stipendiary clergy to fulfil their God given vocation to minister to each local community. To abandon this principle is to put the whole ethos and community witness and mission of the Church of England in danger and over the course of time to further diminish its ability to fund this ministry to the nation as a whole.

*The English Clergy Association
October, 2021.*

2021 POSTCARDS

Dear Richard – *we managed a short break in Cornwall, a welcome rest, and visited the Eden Project last week. Most grateful for your help and support.*

Dear Richard and Trustees – *we are enjoying very much our break in Cornwall. Thank you so very much for helping to make it happen.*

Dear Revd Richard,
Thank you for providing us with an ECA holiday grant which enabled us to enjoy a wonderful family holiday in Port Eynon on the Gower Peninsula. The spring weather was warm enough for ice creams on the beach, but not quite warm enough for shorts and tee-shirts! The holiday provided a much needed chance to relax and begin to recover, after what had been a very difficult twelve months. Blessings to you and all at The English Clergy Association.

Dear Richard,
Just to let you know that we are all having a wonderful time in St Ives. Please express our sincere thanks to the Association for their grant and support to us for this holiday. Very best wishes from us all.

Richard – *with thanks to the Trustees for the holiday grant, which took us to the Norfolk Broads.*

To the ECA – *with many grateful thanks for enabling our holiday in Dumfries and Galloway. It has been accompanied by largely good weather and a much valued and needed complete rest.*

Dear Richard and the English Clergy Association – *Thank you for your generous grant to me and my family for our annual holiday. We enjoyed a beautiful week near Kirkcudbright on the Galloway coast in Scotland. Thank you again.*

Dear The Revd Richard and the Trustees – *at long last Covid-19 restrictions permit the holiday. How wonderful for me that you enabled this much needed period of rest and recovery in Thirsk, North Yorkshire, with added blessings of Holyrood House as a Christian base. I couldn't be more thankful for this blessing. Thank you.*

Dear Richard – *Just a quick note to say that we are very much enjoying our stay up here in Findochty, Morayshire, and we are grateful for the assistance which has*

enabled me and my family to spend time together here. Blessings.

Dear Richard,

I write to thank you and the English Clergy Association for a holiday grant. You may remember that I had planned to write to you from some converted barn in Essex. Sadly, the “pingdemic” made that impossible, and so we have relocated to the North Yorkshire coast. This grant has been invaluable in making a family holiday possible after such a trying time for so many. We are extremely grateful. With all good wishes.

Dear Richard – *please can you pass on to the Trustees our very sincere thanks for their most generous grant which enabled us to enjoy a very happy and restorative holiday in East Devon. We were blessed with excellent weather and returned home much refreshed and ready to return to ministry.*

Dear Reverend Richard Hall – *we had a wonderful family holiday during my extended leave. We travelled as far north as the Isle of Bute in Scotland and as far south as Bath. The photo on this postcard is the view from our holiday lodge on Loch Eck that your generosity helped us to enjoy. Blessings.*

To the Trustees of the ECA – *many thanks for your generous help towards a holiday this year. It is very much appreciated. I was able to escape town and enjoy S. Yorks with family. Very lovely and much needed. Thanks.*

Dear Revd Hall – *holiday greetings from the German North Sea coast. Despite Covid, Mum and I have finally (after 20 months) been able to spend time together on holiday as part of my delayed sabbatical. We are so grateful to the English Clergy Association for the financial gift to make this precious time possible – a time of relaxation and rest, of joy and exploration, and especially of making new, happy memories together – and a balm for the soul. Many thanks and best wishes.*

Dear Mr Hall – *this comes with grateful thanks to the Trustees of the ECA for the generous grant that has enabled us to take a much needed break in Norfolk and Suffolk. After a busy and trying year this was most refreshing. Thank you.*

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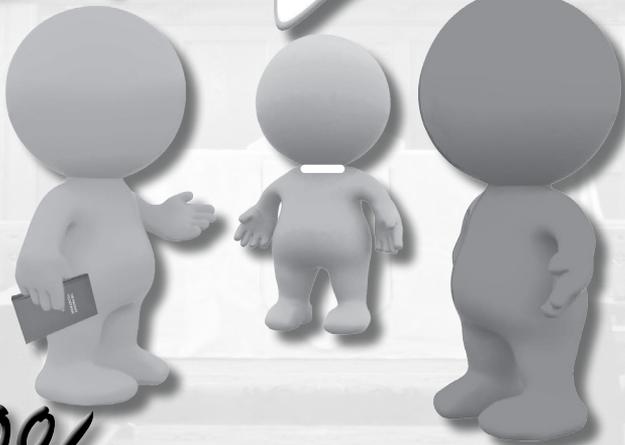
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Are you proud of your country and her glorious history?

Then why not become a member of The Royal Society of St George. Membership provides an opportunity to take part in our determination to honour England and Englishness, and to celebrate our nation and its achievements.

The Aims of Our Society:

- To respect the Monarchy, Duty to our Sovereign and our Country
 - The cause of England and Englishness
1. In accordance with our Constitution, the **Objects of the Society** are: To foster the love of England and to strengthen England and the Commonwealth by spreading the knowledge of English history, traditions, and ideals.
 2. To keep fresh the memory of those, in all walks of life, who have served England or the Commonwealth in the past in order to inspire leadership in the future.
 3. To combat all activities likely to undermine the strength of England or the Commonwealth.
 4. To further English interests everywhere to ensure that St. George's Day is properly celebrated and to provide focal points the world over where English men and woman may gather.

Subscriptions: Full UK Single Membership: £20.00 p.a. Full UK Joint Membership: £30.00 p.a. Plus a one-off £15 joining fee per category.

Other memberships are available. We have branches all over the world

For your subscription you will receive a membership pack with an exclusive RSSG membership badge, membership card, car sticker, welcome letter from our chairman, information on the Society, entry into our Members' Benefits Scheme, two past issues of our Journal. Thereafter you will receive three copies of our Journal per year, updates via e-mail and you can become involved in the many events and activities being held around the world.

Membership application forms available online www.rssg.org.uk, or via Elizabeth Lloyd at the office, via phone, email, or post.

For more information, please contact us at Head Office:

Address: The Royal Society of St George, P.O. Box 397, Loughton, Essex IG10 9GN, England.

Telephone: 020 3225 5011 - Email: info@royalsocietyofstgeorge.com - Website: www.rssg.org.uk

Facebook-www.facebook.com/RoyalSocietyofStGeorge - Twitter account - @RSSGGeorge - LinkedIn - The Royal Society of St George Official Group.

Our Society is non-political, non-racist, non-sectarian and membership is open to all those who agree with our aims and objectives.

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***New Members** I desire to become a Member of the English Clergy Association, and to receive its Journal, and herewith enclose the Annual Subscription of £15.00 (year ending December 2022). (*For the retired, the subscription is £7.50 p.a. including the Journal.*) Free for ordinands in training and those in their first year of ministry. Please indicate if this applies to you.

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Name in full:

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Please complete as clearly as possible.

Receipts on request: *please tick here if required* { }

Please return your membership application, as above, to The English Clergy Association, Hampton Vicarage, 54 Pershore Road, Hampton, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 2PQ.

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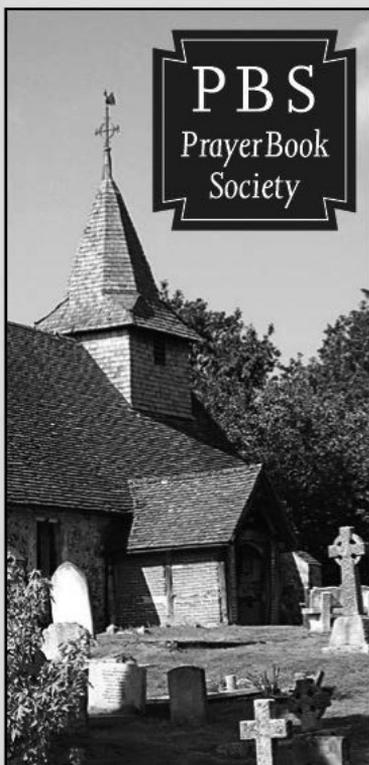
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