



## NEWS FROM FORWARD IN FAITH GUILDFORD June 2014

### **It's not perfect, but we can live with it!**

Shortly after our last Newsletter went to press, the General Synod met in London to debate the Revision Stage of the draft women bishops' Measure, by-passing the normal process whereby a Revision Committee met and then presented its findings to the full Synod. Three changes were approved, which we welcome as strengthening the provision made for 'traditionalist' anglo-catholics and evangelicals.

The first is that the House of Bishops has undertaken to incorporate in its Standing Orders that **any** proposals to amend its Declaration (and not just major changes) can be made only with the approval of 2/3 of each House in General Synod. This is actually a higher threshold than for the 1993 Act of Synod that has been operating for the past 20 years.

Secondly, PCCs requesting oversight from a male bishop or priest can request that this be provided by a man ordained in a male succession. This goes a long way to satisfying our objection to the sexist 'any man will do' concept.

Thirdly, many of us have been concerned that we will be subjected to 'death by starvation' because candidates professing a traditional faith simply would not be selected for ordination training. This has been addressed by a paragraph in the Declaration that states that *'Equal treatment, for example in relation to resource issues and the discerning of vocations to the ordained ministry, is essential irrespective of convictions in relation to gender and ministry. In discerning vocations bishops will continue not to discriminate on the grounds of a candidate's theological conviction on this issue'*. As though they ever did!

As required for major legislation, the draft Measure has now been sent out for debate in all diocesan synods and it is expected to be approved by all of them in time to return to General Synod for a final vote in July. Assuming that it receives the required majorities in each House, it can then proceed to Parliament for ratification. Whether or not this will be before the next General Election is uncertain, but we can expect the first woman bishop to be ordained and consecrated in 2016. But not in time for it to be in Guildford!

The hard work and perseverance of our Synod representatives have achieved something much better than had been offered during the past 20 years and we are grateful to them.

### **We need more members!!**

Guildford FiF currently has about 110 members, of whom 61 are also members of the National organisation. Most have been with us for many years and their faithful support has allowed us to continue to promote our cause in the diocese, but we are mostly over 60 and without additional, ideally younger, members, we are doomed. In 2013 we lost 10 members through death or resignation. Our numbers were maintained by FiF members from other dioceses moving into our area, but we failed to recruit a single new member from our own parishes.

FiF is moving into a new era and, to use the modern parlance, needs to 're-brand' itself to continue to promote the Catholic traditions revived by the 19th Century Oxford Movement of spreading the Gospel through sound theology; emphasis on prayer and the Sacraments; and solemn and beautiful worship.

The Catholic Tradition may not be widely supported in Guildford Diocese, but there are those who agree with our aims and could be persuaded to join us. The best - probably the *only* - way to achieve this is by personal approach and invitation. This doesn't come easily to many of us, but we need to make the effort. Wouldn't it be good if next year's AGM could be told that we have recruited 10 more members!

### **The 2014 FiF National Assembly**

The 2014 Forward in Faith National Assembly will follow the format set last year with the meeting confined to a single day, commencing with Mass and held at the Church of St Alban the Martyr, Holborn. It will be on Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup> - a month later than in recent years. Please make a note of this date and try to be present to hear how Forward in Faith is adapting to meet the changing circumstances within the Church of England

### **Janet Harvey**

It is with great sadness that we record the death on May 5<sup>th</sup>, after a short illness, of Janet Harvey, wife of Fr John Harvey SSC, Assistant Priest at St Augustine's, Aldershot. Her funeral took place at St Augustine's on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. At Fr John's request, the funeral was a celebration of Janet's life with those ladies attending asked to wear bright colours, and the gentlemen light suits. There was no place for Black!

Major Legislation in the Church of England has to be approved by a majority of all the 44 dioceses before it can receive its final vote at General Synod and become Law. The revised draft Measure to allow women to be ordained as bishops was debated at Guildford Diocesan Synod last March. Here is the text of the speech made by Fr Martyn Neale in this debate:

**W**ell – *‘Here we are again, happy as can be, all good friends and jolly good company’*.  
– a rather loose rendering of Psalm 133:

Of course, we’re **not** ‘here’ again – not at all. We’re in a **different** place from where we were 15 months ago. In our Background Note we are told that: ‘rapid work’ has been done, a ‘new approach’ identified, all with a view to securing ‘necessary majorities’. We are reminded that of 44 dioceses, 42 voted ‘Yes’ to the previous draft legislation. But somehow the Note fails to record that a quarter of dioceses voted in favour of a ‘following motion’ sponsored by classical evangelicals and traditional catholics, in effect adding in large letters at the end: ‘Must Do Better’.

Friends, I think General Synod **has** done better. Not well enough, perhaps, for those classical and traditional Anglicans among us to support this fresh legislation in its entirety or at all – but General Synod has listened to the appeal it received – that justice must be done to the sizeable minority which provides so much of the variety and spice of our common life together in the CofE.

So we are in a **different** place – but are we in a **better** place?

Certainly this draft is better legislation. It is shorter, more transparent and less Byzantine. But more important, it is more honest, more generous, and more complete.

- **more honest** because it recognises (at last) that it is by theological conviction as loyal Anglicans, and not some chauvinist sexist whim, that some cannot accept the introduction of women into the historic episcopate;

- **more generous** because it provides at least the potential to keep that loyal minority within the Church as a flourishing, growing element rather than consign it to a ghostly ghetto-like existence;

- **more complete** because it lays these provisions out in the open. Gone is the absurd, unseen Code of Practice, surely the fundamental cause of the last draft’s demise. Instead, there is the ‘Independent Reviewer’, an honest broker for all, sparing the need to resort to expensive Judicial Review to settle disputes, offering in-house speedy and transparent resolution.

Others will want to pick over the detail to discover what devils lie therein. But I believe that this our last chance in our generation to get beyond what has been a contentious issue for far too long. We have spent 20, even 30, years battling it out. It’s time the trench warfare ended so we can get off the battlefield and on to the mission field. Our life together isn’t about winning votes in Synods, it’s about winning souls for Christ.

None of us will find the legislation before us perfect, but it is the best thing we are going to be offered! We **have** to make it ‘good enough’. When it is passed (as I’m sure it will be) we have to make it work – and I believe we can.

It will take energy and effort – it will mean forgiveness, reconciliation, compassion and understanding. It will mean working generously with people in high and lowly positions with whom we disagree – and that will cut both ways. In short, we will need the Grace of God. But then, don’t we always?

However we vote as individuals today, we need to recover our sense of being the Body of Christ. Whatever the future holds (and whether in the future we **can** hold together) is more in God’s hands than ours.

In conscience and by theological conviction I and others may not be able to vote in favour of the draft legislation before us. But if it should receive final approval at General Synod I trust that we together, all of us loyal Anglicans of whatever stripe, will do all we can in love and trust to make it work.

*‘How good and how pleasant a thing it is to live as brothers and sisters in unity!’*



**A**s mentioned in the last Newsletter, our annual visit this year will be to the Glastonbury Pilgrimage on Saturday June 21st. Unfortunately, there has been a disappointing response with not enough members signing up to warrant hiring a coach. Instead, we will aim to travel either by minibus or in several private cars. If you want to come, it’s not too late – just contact Fr Martyn or Graham Leech (details on the back page)

## Looking to the Future

Yes, there is a future for us – and for the Church as a whole. It didn't seem so in the aftermath of the General Synod vote which blocked the women-bishops legislation. The backlash was savage and laced with threats. How dare Synod thwart not just the Holy Spirit but even liberals and feminists, too? If Synod would not eject us, then politicians would be recruited to finish us off. We had blown our last chance to receive 'generous provision'. Well, the spectre of Parliamentary intervention and the appalling discriminatory Measure are behind us and new legislation drawn up by all shades of synodical opinion is certain to be agreed this year. The new Measure is shorter, simpler and much more equitable. It has the potential and, it is claimed, the intention of keeping everyone, including traditional catholics and classical evangelicals, under the CofE roof. Sighs of relief all round! Remarkable as this turnaround is, it's far from the end of the matter. It's one thing to get the legislation right; quite another to make it work as it should.

The Church as a whole faces a number of challenges.

**The CofE is ageing rapidly.** The over-60s make up a vast proportion of our active congregations across the board. These are people who bring a wealth of commitment and experience to our church and we value all they contribute. But time is against them and unless the trend is bucked in a big way they will not be replaced any time soon. It's no surprise that our own Forward in Faith membership mirrors the wider church. We can stake our claim to a future all we like but if we don't bring our younger Christians with us, and make many more of them year in, year out, who will be there to inherit that future? What are we doing to make new Christians and to renew the existing ones?

**The church needs priests.** It's been a tough twenty years for our clergy and ordinands. Clergy numbers have held up remarkably well. Some left early on when the financial package was offered, others were tempted by the Ordinatee. We wish them all well. But there are not enough 'TradCath' priests to serve all the parishes who want us, leaving churches and people vulnerable to takeover by 'Affirming' clergy or pastoral reorganisation into liberal teams. Blessed as we are with a clutch of ordinands at St Stephen's House, Oxford there are signs of hope – but we need still more men, young ones if possible, to offer themselves and to be selected for priestly training. Only thus can we provide for the people who look for the pastoral and sacramental care they need. All dioceses should have a programme for the encouragement of traditional catholic parishes and clergy. It's over 20 years since a stipendiary deacon from our 'integrity' was ordained to a title in Guildford diocese! Substitute 'female' or 'ethnic-minority' and just think

of the scandal that would cause! *We must stake our claim for proper provision here in Guildford and insist, gently but firmly, on it being granted.*

There's also a **failure of confidence** in the truth of the Faith combined with the weak and lacklustre leadership demonstrated by so many of our bishops. The Gospel has always had a social element but if it's not entwined with the hope of salvation it becomes a faint parody of the Apostles' proclamation of Jesus the Christ. Bishops have their part to play on the national stage for sure – but some seem rather too comfy on the red benches of the House of Lords. It's a worrying sign for the future that women bishops might be accelerated into Parliament ahead of those men already in the queue. Surely they should get used to the novelty of being diocesan bishops and ministering to their people for a few years before being waved off to claim their per diem allowances? *We must encourage all bishops, not just 'ours', to recall us to a lively faith where doctrine is central and social action is shaped by these core beliefs.*

**Christianity is under pressure from aggressive atheism and Islam.** The atheists (Dawkins & Co.) with their shrill hecklings are not so much of a worry. Their insubstantial 'cod-philosophical' reflections on a largely-imagined 'Christianity' have little chance of lasting long. Islam is another matter. It presents itself as a simple, practical religion. It appeals to those who seek prescription and order especially among the weak and vulnerable. It offers something our congregations often lack: a warm, inclusive welcome with wrap-around pastoral involvement. Most important, its adherents they carry their belief through into practice. What it lacks, of course, is the Incarnate Son of God who lives and loves and saves. No matter how much we may approve of the zeal, commitment and community involvement of our Muslim neighbours we cannot surrender the mission field to them or any others. Souls are there to be won for Christ's sake. *Others may lack the nerve but we must be strong in our proclamation and evangelism.*

**The future is in God's hands, not ours.** That's not to say we have no part to play; far from it. In fact, congregations with a firm grounding in scripture and/or tradition are the very ones most likely to endure. The high-noon of the wishy-washy liberals is long past, even if they continue to be vastly over-represented in the corridors of church power. Now much of the controversy over women bishops is past, we need to get back to the real business of reaching out into our communities, recalling the lapsed and converting the others. And we shouldn't be too fussy about the niceties of parish boundaries, either. Many of our natural supporters are marooned in parishes which have lost both the Faith and the plot. If they can't worship with us, we must go to worship with them in their homes and ask them to gather friends around them, too. We have been promised a future by General Synod. It's our responsibility to accept the challenge and show the rest of the CofE what can be done. We'll need to keep our wits about us, that's certain. *But with a fair wind and an eager vision I reckon we can remain a blessing for our Church for every generation until kingdom come.*

Fr Martyn Neale



Fr Martyn Neale SSC

## Our Lady of Walsingham in Guildford

Who would have thought it possible? February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2014 saw the Image of Our Lady of Walsingham processed a Guildford Cathedral so full that many had to sit up in the gallery. The congregation had come from all over Southern England, as evidenced by the line of coaches stretching right down the driveway.



*Bishop Lindsay Urwin celebrating Mass in Guildford Cathedral*

The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Lindsay Urwin OGS, Administrator of the Shrine, in the presence of the Master of the Guardians of the Shrine, the Rt Rev'd Martin Warner, Bishop of Chichester; the Bishop of Dorking; and the Dean, the Very Rev'd Dianna Gwilliams.

In his homily, Bishop Lindsay spoke of the insights he had obtained from a meditation by Orthodox Archbishop Anthony Bloom, in which he described Mary silently contemplating the mysteries of the Incarnation cradled in her arms and the One who had given him to her. In these days of constant words - spoken, emailed, tweeted - we must learn to be still and keep silent if we are to listen to God and to other people.

Some pilgrims left after the Mass, but the majority stayed to have lunch, after which there was the Ministry of Healing with Laying on of Hands, anointing and sprinkling with Holy Water from the well at Walsingham.

This magnificent event was the outcome of inspiration and a great deal of hard work by a team headed by Richard North and his wife, Liz, to whom we are very grateful for providing us with an inspirational event and proof that the Catholic Tradition is alive and flourishing.

## Dates for your Diary:

**Sunday June 15<sup>th</sup> (Trinity Sunday) at 6:00 pm**  
**Festal Evensong followed by refreshments at Hawley**

**Saturday June 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**Glastonbury Pilgrimage**

**Thursday August 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm**  
**Assumptiontide Mass at St Augustine's; Principal Celebrant**  
**Rt Rev'd Norman Banks SSC**

**Saturday November 15<sup>th</sup> commencing 10:30 am**  
**FIF National Assembly, St Alban the Martyr, Holborn**

## This Newsletter

**I**t is sent to all those on our list of members and supporters. If you have received it in error, or know of a member who has not received his/her copy, please let our Secretary Richard North know and he will correct the mistake.

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