

# The Parish of St. Edmund, King and Martyr

Waterloo, Ontario  
www.stedmund.ca

## UPDATE

The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada / The Traditional Anglican Communion

February 18, 2011 - **St. Simeon**

### March Schedule

March 6	Sunday	Quinquagesima
March 9	Wednesday	Ash Wednesday
March 13	Sunday	The First Sunday in Lent
March 20	Sunday	The Second Sunday in Lent
March 25	Friday	The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
March 27	Sunday	The Third Sunday in Lent

### Service Times and Location

- (1) All Services are held in the Chapel at Luther Village on the Park - 139 Father David Bauer Drive in Waterloo.
- (2) On Sundays, Matins is sung at 10:00 a.m. (The Litany on the first Sunday of the month), and the Holy Eucharist is celebrated (sung) at 10:30 a.m.
- (3) On weekdays - Major Holy Days - the Holy Eucharist is usually celebrated at 7:00 p.m., 10:00 a.m. on Saturday.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

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1) **Another, 'Mark Your Calendars' - Sunday, February 27 - Vespers at 3:00 p.m.** at *St. Mary Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows Roman Catholic Church* (56 Duke St. West, in Kitchener). Father Nowak, CR, the Pastor, has kindly invited our Parish to Vespers, a social time after, and time for discussion about the Ordinariate. As many of us as possible should attend.

2) **Archbishop Thomas Collins** has set a meeting time for Thursday, March 24 to Saturday, March 26, in Mississauga, Ontario at the *Queen of the Apostles Renewal Centre* (1617 Blythe Road) to discuss the implementation of the Apostolic Constitution, *Anglicanorum coetibus*.

The tentative program includes the following:

**"Thursday, March 24, 2011** - Our opening session will take place in the early evening, likely 7:00 p.m. at which time we will welcome all delegates, join together in prayer and have our first session together. Following the opening session, all delegates will be invited to participate in a wine/cheese reception as we build fellowship on our first evening together.

**Friday, March 25, 2011** - A full day is planned beginning with breakfast at 8 a.m. The day will include prayer, numerous presentations and the opportunity to engage in dialogue. Our tentative schedule concludes with dinner, providing a free evening for delegates to enjoy.

**Saturday, March 26, 2011** - We will continue with prayer & sessions on Saturday morning, concluding with lunch at which time delegates will return home, armed with the wisdom and

knowledge gained through our time together.

Keynote speakers include:

- **Fr. Christopher Phillips**, Pastor, Our Lady of the Atonement Catholic Church in San Antonio, Texas. He is the founding pastor of the first Anglican Use parish, erected in 1983 under the terms of the Pastoral Provision.
- **Archbishop Thomas Collins**, Archbishop of Toronto, Delegate, *Anglicanorum coetibus* in Canada (as appointed by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith)."

**Please mark your calendars** - these are important meetings and, again, as many of us as possible should attend. We'll organize transportation. More details later.

3) **A LETTER TO 'THE PORTAL'** - this page.

4) **ROBERT'S RAMBLINGS - Blinding Light** - the third of four parts - page 3.

5) "Liberal Catholicism's future is that of all forms of liberal Christianity: remorseless decline, an inability to replicate themselves, and their gradual reduction to being cuddly ancillaries of fashionable lefty causes or passive deliverers of state-funded welfare programs." - **BENEDICT'S CREATIVE MINORITY** - page 5.

6) Some last words from - **WILLIAM LAUD** - page 7.

7) The third article on **MARIAN DEVOTION - 3** - page 8.

8) A **SERMON - On the Feast of St Agatha and at a Mass for the Unity of the Church** - page 9.

## A LETTER TO 'THE PORTAL'

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3 The Limes  
St Botolph's Road  
Worthing  
West Sussex  
BN11 4HY

January 20, 2011

Dear Editors,

Because I am computer illiterate a friend has mailed a hard copy of your first issue of *The Portal*. Congratulations! It meets a popular need.

I was pleased to read in it an article about the Founder of my Community, Bishop Charles Gore, who in the 1920's participated in the Malines Conversations. I was also pleased to read an article by my old friend, Father Peter Geldard, with whom I collaborated at the Lambeth Conference of 1978. In the 1920's and again in the 1970's there was some hope that it might be possible for the Anglican Communion as a whole to be reconciled with the See of Peter. The Pope has recently said that in his own day Newman was misunderstood, that his time had not yet come. Perhaps we may claim

something similar for the 1920's and the 1970's. Now, thanks to the generous and imaginative initiative of the Pope himself, the time for reconciliation has come, perhaps at first for only a few, but I like to think that this trickle will become a flood.

In May 2007 some bishops of the Traditional Anglican Communion in different parts of the world came to celebrate with me in Portsmouth the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my consecration as Bishop of Matabeleland in Zimbabwe. We drafted a letter to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, asking if some of us might present in person a petition for rapprochement with Rome. We then went to Walsingham to pray and to post our letter from there. In due course we were given permission to meet with members of the CDF in October 2007. Accordingly we met again in Portsmouth, this time almost all the bishops. We drafted our petition. Every bishop or vicar general who was there, spoke in favour of the petition. During the eucharist every bishop or vicar signed that petition on the high altar after the reading of the gospel, signed also *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. (Two bishops, an

American and an Australian, have since reneged on their signatures.) Three of our number were then elected to take the petition and that signed copy of *The Catechism* to Rome. In May 2010 we were back in Rome for further talks.

We are delighted by *Anglicanorum coetibus*, and wait hopefully for instructions about our implementation of it. We solicit the prayers of your readers.

Enclosed are three pieces apposite to this ecumenical endeavour. Two were written for TAC parish magazines, one in Wales, the other in Canada; one was a testimony to a TAC synod in Canada. You will appreciate that I was addressing myself to Anglicans trying to cope with subliminal Romanophobia within their own psyches and in the psyches of their friends.

With all good wishes,

Yours fraternally,  
(+Robert Mercer CR)

## ROBERT'S RAMBLINGS

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### ***Blinding Light (Acts 9, 9) - 3 of 4***

*(A paper read in a discussion group of Anglican and RC clergy in Zimbabwe.)*

For some Christians, perhaps for many, there is a comparable experience. Our anonymous English writer of the 14<sup>th</sup> century calls it *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and he writes a book with this title. Perhaps he got the title from the Jewish lament after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC? *The Book of Lamentations*, 3, 44, "Thou hast covered Thyself with a cloud that our prayer should not pass through". Our 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish friar calls it *The Dark Night of the Soul*, and he writes a book with this title. *Cloud* is a very English book, short, with lightness of touch. It doesn't take itself with solemnity. It makes jokes. It is at home with God.

After years of meditating about images to be found in Scripture, the Christian finds he is no longer able to pray in the old ways. God appears to have put a cloud between the Christian and Himself. God wants him to learn a new way of prayer, that of contemplation. He is to be still and attentive to God's Being and Person. He is not to strain at words, at thoughts, at feelings. God is not his thoughts of God. God is God. God is not his

experience of God. God is God. God is not his feelings for God. God is God. God therefore detaches him from his former ideas, images, emotions, in order that he may know God the Unknowable. Prayer is to be "a naked intent unto God". (How do you put that into modern English?) To help with this work the Christian may use repeatedly a monosyllabic word, Jesus, God, Love. This word the author calls a "dart of longing love." Sometimes the going will be easy, when God gives the Christian attentiveness. "God will work all by Himself." And then prayer "shall be made full restful and light." But sometimes the prayer will be great turmoil because of self consciousness and distraction. By this prayer of faith the Christian will grow in self knowledge and charity. By unknowing he will know. By unknowing he will love. *Cloud* is a living book. That's to say, if some read it they will say, "Mumbo jumbo!" But it's been around some 600 years. If others read it they will say, "The author knows me. He's writing about me." Because the author describes and explains readers' own experiences to them, *Cloud* will be loved until the second coming.

I know no Spanish. But I can say that the writings of St. John of the Cross are lengthy, solemn, prolix.

There are no jokes. There is no lightness of touch. But St. John is *the* guide to this experience. If Christians are prepared to grapple with the writings of St. Paul the Apostle, they shouldn't find St. John of the Cross more difficult. The two saints are agreed about the fundamental importance of faith. St. John is perhaps the greatest Spanish poet. He wrote love poems, "On a dark night kindled in love with yearnings". She sneaks out when nobody is looking for an assignation with her lover, something no respectable Spanish lady would do. It is notoriously difficult to translate poetry from one language to another. The beauty, the lyricism, don't come across in English. St. John then wrote prose commentaries about his love poems. "On a dark night" - that the apparent loss of God - "kindled in love with yearnings" - that's the Christian's longing for God. Finally, by way of faith through all the darkness, the Christian has union with God through Christ.

After years of meditating about images to be found in Scripture, the Christian finds he is no longer able to pray in the old ways. God wants the Christian to learn a new way of praying, that of contemplation. God puts the Christian in a dark night. "God sees that they are becoming strong enough to lay aside their swaddling clothes, so He sets them down from His arms and teaches them to walk on their own feet, which they feel very strange for everything seems to be going wrong with them." Note that: everything seems to be going wrong. The Christian thinks he's losing his faith or thinks he's losing God Himself, that God is no longer favourable towards him. The reality is the exact opposite. His faith is

being strengthened, his love for God is being deepened. His apparent loss is actually a new discovery of God. He can worship metal images. He can also worship mental images. This is idolatry. He must discover that the true and living God is not his image or understanding of Him. "My little children keep yourselves from idols". (1 John 5, 21.)

John's night has an active part, our own self discipline, fasting, and so on. But our concern now is the passive part. God deprives us of feelings of joy, peace, certainty. We pray, not because we love God, but because of the feeling of peace we get from prayer. Very well then, no feelings of peace. Indeed, we had a kind of lust for spiritual kicks. Very well then, no psychological or emotional rewards of any kind. John even tells us that God has a go at memory, understanding and will. We are unable to rest in memories of God's mercies. Oddly enough, this strengthens faith. We are unable to understand God. All our words and formularies make no subjective sense. We are brought almost to despair, "O God, I know nothing, I understand nothing". To which God might reply, "Now at least you know something, not as an intellectual proposition, but by experience. You know my Godness. To whom then will ye liken Me that I should be equal to him? saith the Holy One". (Isaiah 40, 25.) Prayer consists of hanging on in an attitude that is described as the prayer of obscure faith, the prayer of stupidity, or the prayer of loving regard. The will is the centre of prayer, not the heart or mind. Oddly enough, this strengthens love.

+Robert Mercer CR

## FROM HERE AND THERE

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1) It is always a salutary thing to remember how many silly things one can catch journalists saying when writing on subjects that one, the reader, knows something about. It should always remind us not to trust them too much when they write on subjects about which we know little.

2) The Eucharist is a supernatural transformation, in which substantial change occurs without accidental change. The outward properties of bread and wine continue after consecration, but their essence and substance are replaced by the substance of the true and actual Body and Blood of Christ. This is what requires faith, and what causes many to stumble, because it is a miracle of a very sophisticated nature, one that doesn't lend itself to empirical or scientific 'proof'. But, in a sense, it is no more difficult to believe than the changing of water to ice, in which the outward properties change, while the

substance (molecular structure) doesn't. The Eucharist merely involves the opposite scenario: the substance changes while the outward properties don't. Can anyone reasonably contend that one process is any more intrinsically implausible than the other, when an omnipotent God – particularly One Who took on human nature and became Man – is concerned? From a paper – *Is This God* – by **Dave Armstrong**

3) The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible. **George Burns**

4) **pleonasm**, noun: the use of more words than those necessary to express an idea. e.g. free gift

5) Some people become so expert at reading

between the lines they don't read the lines.

**Margaret Millar**

6) There is nothing more illiberal than a liberal.

7) In the same vein: 'there is no more illiberal force on earth than a liberal with his hands on the levers of power.' **John Stephenson**

8) In the Eucharist, the Son of God comes to meet us and **desires to become one with us**; eucharistic adoration is simply the natural consequence of the eucharistic celebration, which is itself the Church's supreme act of adoration. **Pope Benedict XVI**

9) **Pope Benedict's** declarations over the past few days have been remarkable and, in modern Britain, virtually unprecedented. They were delivered in the calmest, meekest, least ranting way possible, and yet they carried a great authority that largely comes, I think, from the Pope's sense of holiness and evident goodness, as well as from the dignity of his office. Even hard-hearted cynics and sceptics could not fail but listen. **Stephen Glover** in the September 20, 2010 *Daily Mail*

#### 10) When Jesus Came to Birmingham

When Jesus came to Golgotha  
they hanged him on a tree.

They drove great nails through  
hands and feet,

And made a Calvary.

They crowned Him with a crown of thorns,  
red were His wounds and deep.

For those were crude and cruel days,  
And human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham  
they simply passed Him by.

They never hurt a hair of Him,  
they only let Him die.

For men had grown more tender,  
And they would not give Him pain,  
they only just passed down the street

and left Him in the rain.

Still, Jesus cried,

"Forgive them for they know not what they do,"

and still it rained the wintry rain

that drenched Him through and through;

the crowds went home and left the streets

without a soul to see,

and Jesus crouched against a wall

and cried for Calvary.

**G A Studdert-Kennedy**

#### 11) Lavatory writing:

Someone wrote: "I Love Grils"

Someone else then came along and put a line through the word "Grils" and added: "Girls".

A day or two later a fresh line appeared underneath which read: "So what's wrong with us Grils then?"

#### 12) How to avoid the Kiss of Peace?

I believe that 100% of the orthodox will run a hundred miles rather than have to shake hands with their pew neighbour, I certainly would. I find it disruptive right at a stage of the Mass that is critical, the few seconds remaining in which to compose one's soul before receiving Holy Communion.

And, if only it were a handshake; now it has become an embrace, a hug and even a kiss on the cheek type of thing - not at all British! And, despite guidance from the Pope, some priests still insist on going round to every member of the congregation, shaking hands and laughing like they've just won the box of mixed fruit at the Christmas Bazaar.

But, wait just one minute! I have the answer! Only attend EF Masses [Latin Masses] then you won't have to give it. Simple!

**Fr. John Zuhlsdorf**

## **BENEDICT'S CREATIVE MINORITY**

In the wake of Benedict XVI's recent trip to Britain, we have witnessed - yet again - most journalists' inability to read this pontificate accurately. Whether it was Queen Elizabeth's gracious welcoming address, Prime Minister David Cameron's sensible reflections, or the tens of thousands of happy faces of all ages and colors who came to see Benedict in Scotland and England (utterly dwarfing the rather strange collection of angry Kafkaesque protestors),

all these facts quickly disproved the usual suspects' predictions of low-turnouts and massive anti-pope demonstrations.

Indeed, off-stage voices from Britain's increasingly not-so-cultured elites - such as the celebrity atheist Richard Dawkins and others whom the English historian Michael Burleigh recently described as "sundry chasers of limelight" and products of a "self-

satisfied provincialism" - were relegated to the sidelines. As David Cameron said, Benedict "challenged the whole country to sit up and think."

Of course the success of Benedict's visit doesn't mean Britain is about to return to its Christian roots. In fact, it's tempting to say present-day Britain represents one possible - and rather depressing - European future.

In an article welcoming Benedict's visit to Britain, the UK's Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sachs observed, "Whether or not you accept the phrase 'broken society,' not all is well in contemporary Britain." The facts cited by Sachs were sobering. In 2008, 45 percent of British children were born outside marriage; 3.9 million children are living in poverty; 20 percent of deaths among young people aged from 15 to 24 are suicides; in 2009, 29.4 million antidepressants were dispensed, up 334 percent from 1985.

Such is the fruit of a deeply-secularized, über-utilitarian culture that tolerates Christians until they start questioning the coherence of societies which can't speak of truth and error, good and evil, save in the feeble jargon of whatever passes for political correctness at a given moment.

But what few commentators have grasped is that Benedict has long foreseen that, for at least another generation, this may well be the reality confronting those European Catholics and other Christians who won't bend the knee to political correctness or militant secularism. Accordingly, he's preparing Catholicism for its future in Europe as what Benedict calls a "creative minority."

The phrase, which Benedict has used for several years, comes from another English historian Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975). Toynbee's thesis was that civilizations primarily collapsed because of internal decline rather than external assault. "Civilizations," Toynbee wrote, "die from suicide, not by murder."

The "creative minorities," Toynbee held, are those who proactively respond to a civilizational crisis, and whose response allows that civilization to grow. One example was the Catholic Church's reaction to the Roman Empire's collapse in the West in the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The Church responded by preserving the wisdom and law of Athens, Rome and Jerusalem, while integrating the invading German tribes into a universal religious community. Western civilization was thus saved *and* enriched.

This is Benedict's vision of the Catholic Church's role in contemporary Europe. In fact, it's probably the

*only* viable strategy. One alternative would be for the Church to ghettoize itself. But while the monastic life has always been a vocation for some Christians, retreat from the world has never been most Christians' calling, not least because they are called to live in *and* evangelize the world.

Yet another option, of course, is "liberal Catholicism." The problem is that liberal Catholicism (which is theologically indistinguishable from liberal Protestantism) has more-or-less collapsed (like liberal Protestantism) throughout the world. For proof, just visit the Netherlands, Belgium, or any of those increasingly-rare Catholic dioceses whose bishop regards the 1960s and 1970s as the highpoint of Western civilization.

Even the *Economist* (which strangely veers between perceptive insight and embarrassing ignorance when it comes to religious commentary) recently observed that "liberal Catholics" are disappearing. Long ago, the now-beatified John Henry Newman underscored liberal Christianity's essential incoherence. Liberal Catholicism's future is that of all forms of liberal Christianity: remorseless decline, an inability to replicate themselves, and their gradual reduction to being cuddly ancillaries of fashionable lefty causes or passive deliverers of state-funded welfare programs.

By contrast, Benedict's creative minority strategy recognizes, first, that to be an active Catholic in Europe is now, as Cardinal André Vingt-Trois of Paris writes in his *Une mission de liberté* (2010), a *choice* rather than a matter of social conformity. This means practicing European Catholics in the future will be active believers because they have *chosen* and *want* to live the Church's teaching. Such people aren't likely to back off when it comes to debating controversial public questions.

Second, the creative minority approach isn't just for Catholics. It attracts non-Catholics equally convinced Europe has modern problems that, as Rabbi Sachs comments, "cannot be solved by government spending."

A prominent example is Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev, Chairman of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow's Department for External Church Relations. A deeply cultured man, who's completely un-intimidated by either liberal Christians or militant secularists, Hilarion has conspicuously cultivated the Catholic Church in Europe because he believes that, especially under Benedict, it is committed to "defending the traditional values of Christianity," restoring "a Christian soul to Europe," and is "engaged in common defence of Christian values

against secularism and relativism." Likewise, prominent European non-believers such as the philosophers Jürgen Habermas and Marcello Pera have affirmed Europe's essentially Christian pedigree and publically agreed with Benedict that abandoning these roots is Europe's path to cultural suicide.

Lastly, creative minorities have the power to resonate across time. It's no coincidence that during his English journey Benedict delivered a major address in Westminster Hall, the site of Sir Thomas More's show-trial in 1535.

When Thomas More stood almost alone against Henry VIII's brutal demolition of the Church's liberty in England, many dismissed his resistance as a forlorn gesture. More, however, turned out to be a

one-man creative minority. Five hundred years later, More is regarded by many Catholics and non-Catholics alike as a model for politicians. By contrast, no-one remembers those English bishops who, with the heroic exception of Bishop John Fisher, bowed down before the tyrant-king.

And perhaps that's the ultimate significance of Benedict's creative minority. Unlike Western Europe's self-absorbed chattering classes, Benedict doesn't think in terms of 24-hour news-cycles. He couldn't care less about self-publicity or headlines. His creative minority option is about the long-view.

The long-view always wins. That's something celebrities will never understand.

By **Dr. Samuel Gregg** - September 22, 2010

## **WILLIAM LAUD (1573 - 1645) ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY**

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***Martyred on the 10<sup>th</sup> January by the puritan Parliament because of his love for the poor and the Catholic Faith.***

These are some of his last words, preached from the scaffold on Tower Hill before he was beheaded:

"Good People. You'll pardon my old memory, and upon so sad occasions as I am come to this place, to make use of my papers, I dare not trust myself otherwise. This is a very uncomfortable place to preach in, and yet I shall begin with a text of scripture, in the twelfth of the Hebrews, *Let us run with patience that race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Crosse, despising the shame, and is set downe at the right hand of the Throne of God.*

I have been long in my race, and how I have looked unto Jesus the author and finisher of my faith, is best known to Him: I am now come to the end of my race, and here I find the cross, a death of shame, but the shame must be despised, or there is no coming to the right hand of God; Jesus despis'd the shame for me, and God forbid but I should despise the shame for Him; I am going apace, as you see, towards the Red Sea, and my feet are upon the very brinks if it, an argument, I hope, that God is bringing me to the land of promise, for that was the way by which of old He led His people, but before they came to the sea, He instituted a Passover for them, a Lamb it was, but it was to be eaten with very sour herbs, as in the twelfth of Exodus.

I shall obey, and labour to digest the sour herbs,

as well as the Lamb, and I shall remember that it is the Lord's Passover; I shall not think of the herbs, nor be angry with the hands which gathered them, but look up only to Him who instituted the one, and governeth the other. For men can have no more power over me, than that which is given them from above; I am not in love with this passage through the Red Sea, for I have the weakness and infirmity of flesh and blood in me, and I have prayed as my Saviour taught me, and exampled me. That this cup of red wine might pass away from me, but since it is not that my will may, His will be done; and I shall most willingly drink of this cup as deep as He pleases, in the way that He shall be pleased to lead me . . ."

So the speech began. Very much that the Archbishop was greatly concerned to say to the people of England I shall pass over. He was moved to show by many examples that servants of God were very liable to suffer misrepresentation and persecution and death. He had a carefully prepared defense to offer for himself. But I am concerned here with nothing but his relations with God. So I pass on to the closing words:

But I have done. I forgive all the world, all and every of those bitter enemies which have persecuted me; and humbly desire to be forgiven, of God first, and then of every man. And so I heartily desire you to join in prayer with me.

O eternal God and merciful Father, look down upon me in mercy, in the riches and fullness of all Thy mercies. Look upon me, but not till Thou hast nailed my sins to the Cross of Christ, not till Thou hast bathed me in the blood of Christ, not till I have hid myself in the wounds of Christ; that so the punishment due unto my sins may pass over me. And since Thou art pleased to try me to the uttermost, I most humbly beseech Thee, give me now, in this great instant, full patience, proportionable comfort, and a heart ready to die for Thine honour, the King's happiness, and this Church's preservation. And my zeal to these (far from arrogancy be it spoken) is all the sin (human frailty excepted, and all the incidents thereto), which is yet known to me in this particular, for which I come now to suffer; I say, in this particular of treason. But otherwise, my sins are many and great; Lord, pardon them all, and those especially (whatever they are), which have drawn down this present judgment upon me. And when Thou hast given me strength to bear it, do with me as seems best in Thine own eyes. Amen."

Then followed the Lord's Prayer, and then he set himself to die.

It would be unjust, too, not to mention his zeal for the restoration of unity to the Church of Christ, and his largeness, rare in that age, in viewing that subject. "I cannot but wonder," he says in a sermon at the opening of Parliament, "what words St. Paul, were he now alive, would use, to call back unity into dismembered Christendom. For my part, death were easier to me than to see the face of the Church of Christ scratched and torn till it bleeds in every part, as it doth this day; and the coat of Christ, which one was spared by soldiers because it was seamless, rent everyway, and which is the misery of it, by the hand of the priest . . . Good God! What preposterous thrift is this in men, to sew up every small rent in their own coat, and not care what rents they not only suffer, but make, in the coat of Christ! What is it! Is Christ only thought fit to wear a torn garment? Or can we think that the Spirit of unity, which is one with Christ, will not depart to seek warmer clothing? Or, if He be not gone already, why is there not unity, which is wherever He is! Or, if He but gone from other parts of Christendom, in any case, for the Passion, and in the Bowels of Jesus

Christ, I beg it, make stay of Him here in our parts."

Laud was a High-Churchman . . . He believed that if Christ's own religion were to be saved in England, the Church of England must be brought back to the model of primitive antiquity in three points:

- (1) First, she must accept the constitution of the Church as divine, and as including government by Apostles, under whatever name, the existence of a ministerial priesthood, and the transmission of gifts of sacerdotal power, as well as of authority, by Apostles alone.
- (2) Second, she must hold to the original Christian conception of the Sacraments, as divinely ordered means of grace.
- (3) Third, in pursuance of this last idea, she must order her religious services and the furnishing of her churches (the very building itself being of a sacramental order), so as to impress, rather than conceal or contradict, the sacramental idea.

These were principles of the Primitive Church. They were principles of the Anglican Reformation in its great official pronouncements. The Church of England was actually drifting fast away from them, when Laud was raised up as an instrument, and an effectual instrument, for her salvation.

Archbishop Laud's beautiful prayer for the Church and for re-unity is now in many Books of Common Prayer, i.e. Canadian, American, etc.

O gracious Father, we humbly beseech Thee for Thy holy Catholic Church; that Thou wouldest be pleased to fill it with all truth, in all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, establish it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Him who died and rose again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

From a lecture by the late **Rev'd Lucius Waterman D. D.** delivered before the students of the *General Theological Seminary*, New York, 6<sup>th</sup> February 1912. From the Parish magazine of Presteigne, Wales.

## MARIAN DEVOTION - 3

### ***The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary or the Dormition of the Theotokos***

According to Catholic Theology and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Virgin Mary, "having

completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." This

means that Mary was transported into Heaven with her body and soul united. The feast day recognizing Mary's passage into Heaven is celebrated as The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a singular participation of her Son's resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians.

We need to emphasize that this is not an exclusively Roman Catholic celebration but is shared by the Orthodox and the Catholics of all stripes and even some Protestants: For instance Orthodox Bishop Kalistos Ware says: ". . . Orthodox tradition is clear and unwavering in regard to the central point [of the Dormition]: the Holy Virgin underwent, as did her

Son, a physical death, but her body - like His - was afterwards raised from the dead and she was taken up into heaven, in her body as well as in her soul. She has passed beyond death and judgment, and lives wholly in the Age to Come. The Resurrection of the Body has in her case been anticipated and is already an accomplished fact. That does not signify, however, that she is dissociated from the rest of humanity and placed in a wholly different category: for we all hope to share one day in that same glory of the Resurrection of the Body which she enjoys even now.

By **The Reverend Mervyn Edward Bowles**

## SERMON

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### ***On the Feast of St Agatha and at a Mass for the Unity of the Church***

Each year, about this time, the Vatican produces an updated martyrology, a list of those clerics, religious and laypeople who are known to have died for the faith in the previous year. These martyrologies have been growing of late, and while no one is going to torture or imprison us for what we believe in this country it does us well to remember that there are many parts of the world where our brothers and sisters are suffering active persecution and that the shedding of blood for Christ's sake is not something from a bygone age.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church has this to say: "*Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith: it means bearing witness unto death. The martyrs bears witness to Christ who died and rose, to whom they are united in charity. The martyrs bear witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine. They endure death through an act of fortitude*" it continues: "*the Church has painstakingly collected the records of those who persevered to the end in witnessing to the faith. These are the acts of the martyrs. They form the archives of truth written in letters of blood*".

What a telling phrase that is: "*the archives of truth written in letters of blood*". And it could not be more apt a description of your own Patron Saint in this place. Agatha is believed to have died in the Sicilian city of Catania in the year 251 – and nearly eighteen hundred years later the memory of her having made the supreme sacrifice is still kept fresh – indeed her inclusion in the Roman Canon has meant that she is daily held up as an example of Christian virtue at altars all around the world. A life lived wholly for Christ has a significance which cannot be limited by time – it attains an eternal quality. St Agatha and the

long line of martyrs down to our own times can echo the Letter to the Romans, when it claims: "*we can boast about our sufferings. These sufferings bring patience, as we know, and patience brings perseverance and perseverance brings hope, and this hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us*". (5:4-6)

The word "*martyr*" means "*one who witnesses*" and in its early usage in the Book of Acts it referred to the Apostles meeting opposition and facing up to conflict as they began the preaching of the Gospel; only later, as the official persecutions grew more intense and bitter, was martyrdom reserved as a term for those who had paid the ultimate price – even then, there were still those called "*white martyrs*" whose heroic life style and perseverance was reckoned to them for righteousness, even though they were forced to shed no actual blood.

This responsibility, this duty, of witness, of proclamation, of sharing, is of course not restricted to the few. By virtue of our Baptism and Confirmation, there is no one who is not called to testify to what they believe, in their own circumstances: the witness given by the child in the playground and the adult in the workplace, necessarily, may be offered in a different idiom from that of the theologian and the preacher, but none of us is freed from the obligation to speak up and speak out, when and where we can, of the wonderful mysteries of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. President Kennedy expressed this truth when in his inauguration address to the American people he declared: "*a man does not have the right to live, unless he has first found something for which he is*

*prepared to die*". In our case, of course, "Someone" has to be substituted for "something".

In the accounts which have come down to us, St Agatha had to endure an extended period of assault, both moral and physical. In those terrible hours and days she must often have reflected on the words of Jesus: *"I tell you most solemnly unless a wheat grain falls in the ground and dies it remains only a single grain, but if it dies it yields a rich harvest. Any one who loves his life loses it: anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life"* (John 12:24). It has always been true that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church, and wherever the individual wheat grains have fallen, there has been a rich harvest, and the roots of Christ's mystical Body have been embedded deeply in society after society.

But Jesus' promise that the Church would be indefectible until the end of time, that not even the gates of Hell would prevail against it, gives no room for complacency. I remember a conversation with Graham Leonard while he was Bishop of London in which he made just this point. As a young man he had been much impressed by the vigour and zeal of the Church in North Africa which had produced Perpetua and Felicity, Cyprian and Augustine, but when he had been able to visit the cities associated with this great flowering of Christian culture he was hugely disappointed to find no trace of what had been. Not a church, not a convent, not even a ruin – the sands of time had swept it all away. The Catholic Church will continue to be the vehicle of salvation until the end of time – we know that – but its individual components, local churches, may well have only a limited shelf life. Some, like those in Eastern Europe smothered by atheism, have been destined to rise again, while others, apparently sink without trace: a memory – no more.

At risk of moving where angels fear to tread, I think I ought to say something about the idea of the Ordinariate which is on all our minds at present. It seems to me – and this a purely personal reaction – that there is an invitation here, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to allow much to fall into the ground and appear to die, in order that a greater harvest may be reaped. In thanking God for so much that has been achieved – and in this building we think of the pastoral ministry of Father Dolling and his like – we need to see where the example of the great witnesses to the Faith is pointing.

There is a legend of St Peter visiting St Agatha after dreadful torture to heal her wounds. Perhaps Peter is reaching out to us today drawing us closer to Christ and to one another. The Ordinariate is an entirely new and radical initiative – it cuts through so much that had been perceived as the ecumenical norms and says that if you see communion with the Successor of Peter as of the "esse" of the Church and if you can accept the Catechism as the norm of faith, then you are virtually free to write your own cheque and establish your own parameters. We have here a fresh model for reconciliation whose implications have yet to be tested and understood. May it help towards the fulfilment of Christ's prayer that all should be one, that the world may believe.

That great English writer, Edith Sitwell, once said: *"all in the end is harvest"*. In Christ's own way, in Christ's own time, may that harvest become a reality for us all – aided by the example and intercession of St Agatha.

By **Fr Christopher Colven**, a former Anglican priest and now (Catholic) Rector of St James', Spanish Place, gave this homily at the Traditional Anglican Communion church of St Agatha, Landport, Portsmouth, UK on February 5, 2011

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