

Diocesan News

ISSUE 84: APRIL 2009

Message from Bishop Idris

I WAS trying to remember the first Easter that I was conscious of. I didn't make a very good job of it but I think that daffodils – or lots of flowers anyway – were certainly part of it, and Easter eggs which were coloured and patterned hens' eggs, much later the chocolate kind.

I do remember that Easter day, like Christmas day, was 'special' though I could not have said why at the time.

Other Easters come to mind, like the first Easter after my mother had died in January which put me in touch with how the disciples must have felt and reacted to encountering the risen Christ whom they had seen suffer and die on the cross. That Easter there were tears of loss and of hope – and Easter can still do that to me today.

The symbolism of Easter as a Christian festival is rich and life-giving. Being able to share in the liturgical ceremonies and know their history adds immeasurably to the season. I am glad that in recent years more and more churches have begun to use these ways of rekindling faith.

As we were reminded again as Lent began, the early

Christians made of Lent a season of preparation.

Those who were seeking baptism began a time of instruction and of penitence so that at the Easter Vigil they came to their baptism and first Communion, gathered together in one place for the service.

All who could would get to the cathedral where the Bishop would preside at the service which was once a year and always in the mother church. The symbolism of passing from darkness into light and of sharing in the risen life of Christ was, and is, compelling.

Actually baptism must have been a daunting step, not only because it possibly led to discrimination and perhaps persecution but in the actual rite itself – full immersion, often unclothed so that the white robe of baptismal new life could be put on – taking place in cold water and in semi-darkness, then leading to light and celebration with the Eucharist itself as the climax of Christian profession and welcome into the family of believers.

Life-changing it was meant to be and still ought to be now even though we have moved away from quite such a dramatic setting.

But, however we observe the feast – 'Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, let us keep the feast putting behind us malice and wickedness and feasting on sincerity and truth'. Jesus is the one in whom sincerity and truth is to be found and who calls us to share in this new way of living.

The prayer at the lighting of the Easter candle gives us what we need to expect as we look to have the risen Christ walking with us through life –

'May the light of Christ, rising in glory, banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.'

Yes – Amen – now and always. **+Idris**

Pray it with flowers

SPRING is around the corner and by **Saturday 9 May** it will be well and truly here.

This is the date of Education Action Network's next workshop – Pray it with Flowers – at St Margaret's, Kilmarnock Road, Newlands.

Registration is from 9.30am, with a varied programme starting at 10am.

Lunch will be provided after demonstrations of flower arranging followed, in the afternoon, by everyone having a go.

Participants are asked to bring greenery to share.

Let the organisers know by 4 May if you are coming.

This is a popular and fun day and the Network members are looking forward to seeing lots of participants. To book or get further information contact lindawhitby@btopenworld.com or 01294 276838.

Also in Diocesan News this month . . .

Bishop sets retirement date

Go to work in Brazil

The church that's started to learn about volunteering

What went on at Synod

Centenary celebrations

Events and opportunities

Bishop announces he will retire in the summer

THE Most Revd Dr Idris Jones, Bishop of Glasgow & Galloway and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, will retire as Diocesan Bishop at the end of July.

Announcing the news to Diocesan Synod, Bishop Idris stressed: "Stepping down as Diocesan Bishop will not mean that it will not be possible to continue in ministry and service of the Church in some other way and I

look forward to new possibilities in the years ahead.

"I have every intention of functioning fully as Bishop up to the date of my retirement; and the life and work of the diocese will go on, and planning for the future will continue in those areas where the diocese needs to determine policy."

Details of the election of his successor will be announced at a later date.

Chance to go to Brazil and help keep

ABBA (Associação Brasileira Beneficente Aslan) helps favela (shanty-town) churches to rescue youngsters at risk of becoming street kids.

If they can't get them to stay with their own families, they train Christian families to foster them.

Student Kirsty Plummer, a member of St Mary's Episcopal Church in Hamilton, has seen the work of ABBA at first hand.

Now she's back in Scotland and leading support plans for the project to have its own building in São Jorge, one of the favelas in the vast metropolis of São Paulo.

And she's looking for volunteers who can lend their skills on one of two work teams aiming to travel there this year and next.

At St Mary's, rector Ian Barcroft recalled how Roy and Anne Gordon had introduced the work of ABBA after returning from Brazil to retire in Lanarkshire.

ACTION

Spurred into action by St Mary's, six teenagers and four adults went out on a visit, part of a larger group of supporters from churches in Hamilton.

Ian said: "There was a real willingness to support the work of one of ABBA's young workers, Robert Meikle.

"Robert, originally from Kirkintilloch, works with his Brazilian wife Sylvana in a favela called São Jorge. It's in São Paulo, a city with a population of 22million, including many street children."

The group spent 18 months planning the trip and raised over £20,000, funding a minibus and a small dwelling for a favela family.

Robert and Sylvana's ABBA project is called Semear (meaning 'to sow' in Portuguese). It encourages children to stay with their families rather than leave their favela.

Ian explained: "The families in the favela live in abject poverty yet in close proximity to São Paulo's great wealth.

"The attraction of the city is a lure to children to live on the streets without parental support, leaving them vulnerable to abuse, addiction and prostitution."

Kirsty visited the project again for three months in 2007, and she is now leading support plans that have

kids from danger

Inspired by the lion of Narnia, a charity that saves the poorest of Brazil's children from street life has won the hearts of Christians in Scotland...

sprung up across Scotland.

Ian said: "With the help of Kirkintilloch Baptist Church and churches in Buckie, as well as Episcopal churches in Scotland, more money has been raised to support Robert and Sylvana's vision of a purpose-built resource for Christian outreach and family support in the São Jorge favela.

"Now £40,000 has been raised to buy a three-storey building in the favela which, when refurbished, will be the base for the project."

Kirsty added: "There is the real possibility that a group of interested adults from Scotland will visit Brazil this summer in late July or early August.

"This would preferably be a group of skilled individuals in architecture, surveying, building etc, as the trip would likely involve a great deal of practical work in the new building in São Jorge."

Already liaison work is in progress with an architect in Brazil and professionals in Scotland.

There is also a plan for a group of young people and adults to go to Brazil in July 2010.

Said Kirsty: "This trip will be helping out in any way we can with Robert and Silvana, probably with ongoing work in the house, children's work and possibly helping at a camp."

INFORMATION LUNCH

There's to be an information lunch on **Saturday 25 April** at 1.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall, offering more details about the trip and fundraising, as well as a Skype link with Robert and Sylvana Meikle in Brazil.

If you have construction-related skills and are interested in volunteering this summer, e-mail the Casa Abba Steering Group: info@casaabbaproject.co.uk.

For general background and links, visit

The church with no volunteers

I was invited by the Diocese of Gothenburg to attend a conference of its priests who were discussing how to stimulate their parishioners to volunteer for work in the Church.

They were also interested to learn about courses and workshops the Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway provides.

In Sweden the situation is that all work in the church is paid for because everyone contributes through the country's tax system towards the upkeep of the church. The Diocese of Gothenburg is looking to the future when perhaps this won't be the case and then what will they do?

Before going there, I had not appreciated that the Lutheran Church is structured differently from the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Each church is a separate entity, concerned only with its own congregation. I expect there will be co-operation occasionally, but as a general rule each church has only itself to consider.

There is no provincial oversight or exchanging of views and ideas, no provincial conferences. So the structure is totally different.

And through the tax system they do have money so their establishments are well founded and beautifully maintained and heated.

Because we have a custom where people are asked or volunteer to do a particular job, someone will eventually step forward – usually!

This is a novel concept to Swedish church leaders and their congregations. How will they get people to

Taxpayers fund church work in Sweden. Linda Whitby went there to discover a whole new outlook where they don't rely on volunteers...

volunteer if the work has been paid for in the past?

Some of their questions seemed strange to my ears.

How long would the volunteer do the job? What would happen if the person didn't do the work properly?

PUZZLED

The priests seemed puzzled that in many cases it is them who would be asking people to volunteer because they should know who in their congregation would be most likely to undertake unpaid work.

Trying to explain a summer fête was interesting. They don't have these because they don't need to raise money! Of course, a fête is a lot more than a scheme for raising money; it is about fellowship and working together.

From my point of view it was a successful meeting and I hope it will bear fruit.

I have been asked for a copy of the presentation which included suggestions on how to get people of different ages involved in the Church and how we plan workshops and training events here.

❖ *Linda is convenor of Glasgow & Galloway's Education Action Network*

Workshops with Faith in Older People

FAITH in Older People (FiOP) aims to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of older people by working with those providing practical, pastoral or spiritual care.

Its courses provide practical methods and tools for use with older people to help them feel valued members of society, particularly those who have dementia or sensory loss.

The following one-day (10am–4pm) events are offered in the next few months.

A matter of life and death of the mind (finding ways to connect with people with dementia). Facilitators are clinical psychologist Kate Allan and writer John Killick. Choice of two dates: Tuesday 21 April, Albert Halls, Stirling; Tuesday 2 June, Ignatian Spirituality Centre, Glasgow. Fee £95.

Old Age: Wasteland or Harvest Field? Speakers include Dr Harriet Mowat, Gaynor Hammond, Prof John Starr, Revd Sue Kirkbride. Friday 8 May, Eden Court, Inverness. Conference fee £20.

Spiritual journaling. John Killick will take participants through the practicalities of keeping a spiritual journal, with emphasis on creative ways into accessing insights and shaping the material. Saturday 23 May, Edinburgh. Fee £80.

For further information e-mail info@fiop.org.uk or call 0131 346 7981.

THE centenary of St Mary's, Bridge of Weir, falls on 2-3 May when there will be two special services.

Says one of the organisers: "We shall be celebrating with a Choral Evensong at 6pm on Saturday 2 May. St Mary's Cathedral Choir will provide the music for us and our preacher will be the Very Revd Dr Gregor Duncan, Dean of Glasgow & Galloway. We shall follow the service with a party in the church.

"At 10.30am on Sunday 3 May, there will be a Eucharist where our celebrant will be the Most Revd Dr Idris Jones, Bishop of Glasgow & Galloway, and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church. This special service will be followed by lunch.

"We hope that as many of our friends as possible will join us for one or both of these events.

"Our only request is that you let us know if you are going to join us, so that we can plan the catering."

Contact Gill Reynolds on 01505 842 629 or gill.reynolds3@btinternet.com.

What happened at Diocesan Synod

Diocesan secretary Gib FitzGibbon gives a digest . . .

THE annual Diocesan Synod was held on Saturday 28 February, and was attended by Lay Reps of most charges, most of the clergy in the diocese, and visitors from other denominations.

The **Bishop's Charge** (see your magazine editor for a full transcript) spoke of the Good News that the Church has to proclaim through action in supporting and caring in every community where the church is. Central to our discipleship is the need to advocate the needs of the poor and so to ensure that the commitment of the nations of the world to achieve the Millennium Development Goals remains at the top of the agenda and is not pushed aside. The Anglican church has also to work hard to remain faithful to the five Marks of Mission to the world.

Appointments. Synod appointed the Diocesan Secretary, Diocesan Treasurer, the Property Committee, the Boundaries Committee, and the Diocesan Auditor; and elected diocesan reps to General Synod, the Provincial Faith & Order Board; and the Provincial

Panel for Episcopal Elections.

Motions. Synod made the following decisions:

Approved the accounts for last year, and the budget for the current year.

Approved the proposed changes to Canon 53 which will make it easier to change our grievance procedure without changing the Canon each time (which can take up to three years); the proposed changes to Canons 1 and 11 necessitated by age discrimination legislation; and Canon 62 (of Retirement of Clergy), intended to bring the various arrangements, under which clergy undertook duties particularly after the current retirement age of 65, into one set of rules. It meant that the Canon would more accurately meet the situation of the day.

Debated and rejected a motion that 'this Synod propose that General Synod invite the Administration Board to consider a requirement that all dioceses should have a designated person with responsibilities for disability issues within the diocese', with the Bishop's assurance that appropriate steps would be taken within the diocese.

Approved a motion that 'this Synod affirm the response of the group considering the proposed Anglican Covenant as representing the views of this Diocese'.

Presentations were received on church insurance; Aqua Boxes (the recipient of the Bishop's Lent Appeal) and the work of the newly appointed diocesan ministry development officer.

Reports were given on:

Compliance with Child Protection requirements;

Education Action Network;

Overseas Companions Conference;

Youth Network;

Heart for the City;

Provincial Conference 2009;

Back to Church Sunday;

Stewardship;

Property.

Notice was given by the Bishop of his intention to retire at the end of July (more below).

Next Synods: General Synod 11–13 June 2009; Electoral Synods – dates to be notified; Diocesan Synod 27 February 2010 (TBC).

For more details, see your Lay Rep.

In brief: events around the diocese . . .

THE annual diocesan ministry celebration service takes place on Saturday 30 May at St John's Dumfries.

It is for all who are in authorised lay ministry and their supporters.

This year, pastoral assistants and worship leaders will be re-appointed during the service.

THE next Provincial Conference for the Scottish Episcopal Church will take place 2-4 October in the Macdonald Highland Resort, Aviemore.

The theme is Living Well: Proclaim, Discover, Respond, and the underpinning Bible passage is the 'Woman at the Well' narrative (John 4).

Key speakers are Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Reading; Annabel Goldie MSP; and Revd Erik Cramb. The residential fee is £265 (single-occupancy supplement £30). Registration forms from the SEC website should be submitted by 30 April. Visit www.scotland.anglican.org.

A CHOPIN piano recital will be given by Aleksander Kudajczyk at Holy Trinity, Ayr, Thursday 23 April, 7.30pm. Admission £8 (£6 concessions).

SCOTTISH Church Heritage Research will host a conference this month on church interiors. It's in Edinburgh, Saturday 25 April, 9.15am-5pm. Tickets £20. Contact 01334 844822 or schroffice@btinternet.com.

A COURSE on icon painting in the Coptic tradition will be held at Elshieshields Tower, Lochmaben, 2-6 June. The tutor will be Dr Stephane Rene, tutor at the Prince's Trust for Sacred Art. Cost: £550 residential to include tuition

and full board; or £400 non-residential, to include tuition, lunch, tea and coffee. Five hours' tuition per day. All materials except brushes supplied. Write to make a booking to: info@sacredspacegallery.com.

More details: www.sacredspacegallery.com

A CHRISTIAN Aid art exhibition will take place on Saturday, 16 May, at St Mary's, Hamilton, 10am-4pm. To arrange to exhibit artwork, contact Barbara Stobie on 01698 854190 or 07731 861957.

THE necessity of secularist régimes is the topic of a lecture by Professor Charles Taylor at Glasgow University on Thursday 21 May at 6pm. To book a free place contact A.Hair@admin.gla.ac.uk or 0141 330 3593.

Next issue . . .

ITEMS for the May issue may be submitted by **Monday 13 April** in prose text (**not** leaflets, adverts, posters or PDFs, please) to the editor, Susi Cormack Brown: dns@episcopalglasgow.co.uk, or c/o the Diocesan Centre, 5 St Vincent Place, Glasgow G1 2DH.

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Bishop's Charge to Diocesan Synod

THE following is the Bishop's address to Diocesan Synod.

Brothers and Sisters of our diocese: We meet as a Synod at the beginning of the season of Lent when, as the disciples of Jesus, we turn our hearts and minds to the great central truths of our faith.

Jesus turned his face to Jerusalem where he was to live through the agony of his passion and death and to be raised in triumph by God the Father, beginning what the Apostle Paul described as new life in Christ.

At the centre of our meditations stands the cross – a symbol for all the world of what the ministry of Jesus was about and the ultimate declaration of the love of God that must in the end restore the whole of creation to a right relationship with God; and therefore with each other and with the world.

The cross stands like a doorway through which the believer passes. On one side of the cross there is darkness, despair and a challenge to any sense of hope; on the other side of the cross there is new life; recreation and trust in the goodness and almighty purposes of God.

Our hope is in Christ and this is especially true when we are confronted by circumstances in life that encourage us only to see the dark.

The financial crises through which all countries are now working have taken away from thousands a security and a trust in material wellbeing. No one is unaffected but some, those who are poor, suffer most. Where shall we find our hope if not in Christ?

The Church has good news to proclaim but this is not just a matter of belief; it is a matter of action as in every community the Church is called to offer support and care in a direct and physical way.

Central to our discipleship is the need to advocate the needs of the poor, and so to ensure that the commitment of the nations of the world to achieve the Millennium Development Goals remains at the top of the agenda and is not pushed aside.

The Anglican Church has also to work hard to remain faithful to the five Marks of Mission to the world.

As you are aware, a provincial conference is being held this autumn in

which those Marks of Mission will be celebrated and, we hope, sealed into the life and witness of our Scottish Episcopal Church.

The conference is not to be seen as an optional add-on to our life; its message is central to our development of a strategy for mission in the years ahead. We shall hear more of this in the course of the Synod but I believe that we must give earnest consideration as to how we can take part in full and so allow the message to sink deep into the life of every congregation.

We invite our candidates for Baptism, Affirmation and Confirmation to take promises which, on each occasion, we as members of the Church are also invited to re-affirm as our own commitment to discipleship. Peace, justice and the integrity of creation are the words we use.

In terms of justice, one area in which we can make every effort to be as good as we can be is in the protection of children and vulnerable adults. It is therefore good to welcome from the General Synod office at this Synod the provincial protection officer, Leo Lanahan, who will address the Synod.

Before he does so, I have to share with you a concern not only of mine but also of the Staff Group that we are not sufficiently up to speed with this provision within the diocese.

It is a matter to which the diocese must give some priority.

There is confusion as to what system for registration by vestries has been adopted by the diocese; the diocesan office is not being kept informed of provision made by vestries although this is a matter of obligation on all congregations.

I hope that in this Synod we can make clear what is required and be firm in our resolution to fulfil those requirements.

Just a few months ago the diocese experienced an unusual number of vacancies and this was cause for concern.

I am pleased to note that at the moment there is a realistic possibility that we can soon have the normal number of vacancies which are bound to occur from time to time.

The Dean shares with me the responsibility for supervising vacancies and we are both grateful to those priests who have been willing to take on addi-

tional duties as interim priests.

What we have not been able to address is the way in which some areas of the diocese have more priests (retired and not retired) than are needed by the Church; whilst other areas are at full stretch to breaking point.

A similar inequality exists in the function of Area Councils, most of which fulfil their function as part of the decision-making process in the diocese, but a few of which have not been able to function at all for one reason or another.

I put on record that the Staff Group and Diocesan Council are aware of the need to take remedial action on this.

So there is work to do. Yet, taken overall, the diocese is applying itself to seek to be obedient to our declared intention as the people of God to become more Godward; forward and outward.

This has been our aspiration for the past 15 years since Bishop John led us to make it our determination and vision.

It remains a valid benchmark for all of us in the diocese as it remains a benchmark against which we have to assess this Synod at its conclusion. Will it mark us as more Godward, forward and outward in our life together as disciples of Christ? Let us pray that it will.

Lent, as we are told, is a season meant for growing. The kind of growing that we need is like that of John the Baptist, that through this season Jesus must increase as our selfish preoccupations decrease, for the Church does not exist for its own sake or in order to preserve itself.

The call to take up the cross invites us to engage with the real world and not to run away from the challenges that we have to face. Jesus promised not that we should be defended from difficulty but that through it all we should find our still centre in God.

‘Do not be afraid; I have overcome the world that your joy might be full.’

May we make that journey from the dark side of the cross to the light and life that lies through it and beyond it and may our experience of the light encourage us that our light may so shine before men that they may give glory to our Father who is in Heaven.

+Idris