



February 2011

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A very Ordinariate Approach to Church Unity

This is the time of the Church year when we look towards praying for Church Unity. It might be an appropriate time therefore, to put forward a plan by which Church unity might be made more possible, despite the many differences facing us, by welcoming difference as diversity.

The underlying principle of the recent establishment of an ordinariate by Pope Benedict is not particularly new. The Anglican Church used the same principle following the establishment by the Lateran Council in 1870 of the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. At that time several formerly Roman archdioceses came into Communion with the See of Canterbury, among them the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht, the Philippine Independent Church, and the Mar Thoma Church (for slightly different reasons). Similar to the ordinariate, this contractual arrangement allows each church body to keep their own patterns of worship and independence. However, unlike the ordinariate, it does not require re-ordination and 'it does not require from either Communion the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, sacramental devotion or liturgical practice characteristic of the other, but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian faith.' (quoted from the Church of England yearbook 2000).

The principle itself involves addressing a particularly difficult issue which is that if the majority of any Christian Church decides on a course of action which deviates from practice, though not always in intent, from what has been said before, some feel left out and feel like a sect within their own Church. If they pull away because of their principles, in essence they become a sect of their own previous denomination. How might they organisationally re-join the universal Church even when the larger Church to which they belong does not hold their own particular views?

The present Anglican Communion ordinariate-style arrangement allows us to affiliate with other communions, allowing intercommunion of its members, while respecting differences.

However, I was wondering if there might be a potential use of this existing arrangement to resolve a long-standing issue not only for the Anglican Communion at large, but ecumenically as well. That is tackling the central issue of the recognition of Anglican orders by the Roman Catholic Church which prevents intercommunion between our two Churches. The resolution of this problem might be quite straightforward.

The principle goes on the axiom expressed in geometry that if $A=B$ and $B=C$, then $A=C$.

$A=B$: since, from the Roman Catholic point of view, there can be no question of the validity of the Apostolic Succession of the orders of the Old Catholic Churches, since they themselves consecrated the bishops,

$B=C$: since the Old Catholic Churches are in Communion with the Anglican Church and can participate in Anglican services,

$A=C$: then if in every subsequent consecration of an Anglican Bishop, there were at least 3 co-consecrators from the Old Catholic Church then, in one generation, all Anglican Bishops, priests and deacons would eventually be validly ordained in a Roman-recognised apostolic succession, and intercommunion would theoretically be possible between the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, while still recognising the differences.

If that is the case, then the Church of England can only thank Pope Benedict for reminding them of its own form of ordinariate and Church Unity would be possible on an intercommunion level. If those Roman Catholic Bishops and priests who wish to remain practising their own faith and still be able to marry form themselves into their own ordinariate in Communion with the Church of England, remaining practicing their own faith but not in conformity with the Church of England such as the Old Catholics have done, then unity without conformity would be possible. This pattern could also be extended ecumenically, so that unity with diversity could be based eventually on a mutual recognition of each others' orders through participation in ecumenical ordinations by those whose apostolic ordination is recognised by Rome, even though not in Communion with them. If this were done, then the Church as a whole would eventually have a basis of unity based on a mutual recognition of orders.

This might be worth discussing on a wider level.

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Bringing Europe Closer to its People

As part of the series of regular encounters between churches and the incoming EU Presidencies, a delegation of Hungarian and European church representatives was received by the Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orbán on Monday, 17 January 2011 in Budapest. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister Zolt Semjén and the Secretaries of State Mihály Varga, Peter Szijjártó, Zoltán Balog and László Szászfalvi as well as by several advisers.

Among the specific topics which the delegation of church representatives raised were questions with regard to family policies, the situation of the Roma communities in Europe, the implementation of religious freedom and the EU Danube Strategy. Topics also included the social dimension in European policies and, in particular, in relation to the implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy.

Prime Minister Orbán responded to the churches' concerns and welcomed their active engagement with the Hungarian government during the forthcoming 6 months and beyond. He asked the churches for their support in bringing all European governments and societies to recognise that the integration of Roma communities should be a European, and not just a national commitment of some European governments. It will only be possible to improve the living conditions of Roma throughout Europe, if all European governments cooperate. Identification of best practices is a priority for the Hungarian EU Presidency, to which the churches with their experience and well-established relationships with Roma communities have much to contribute.

In view of the forthcoming debates in the European Parliament and the EU's Foreign Relations Council, the Prime Minister expressed his support for an effective response by the European Union to the persecution of Christians and the increasing attacks on Christian communities throughout the world. Such a response could be envisaged either by the Presidency itself or through the newly-established External Action Service of the European Union.

Regarding the first implementation phase of the EU Danube Strategy, the Prime Minister and the church representatives agreed on the need for strengthening reconciliation and inter-cultural dialogue as two important elements of cooperation between governments and civil society in the Danube region.

As one of the priorities of the Hungarian EU Presidency is to bring Europe closer to its citizens, the church representatives emphasised the involvement of civil society at large, as well as of religious communities in particular in the decision-making process on the European level. Prime Minister Orbán in his response acknowledged the difficulties of the European Institutions to get closer to the citizens. He encouraged the churches to maintain their important role as bridge builders, as churches are organised on the local, national and regional level and could, therefore, bring the "voice of the people" to the Institutions.

The meeting on 17 January is, therefore, to be seen as the starting point for an ongoing dialogue between the churches and the Hungarian EU Presidency. The churches used the occasion to present their programme, which will accompany the Presidency in the first half of 2011.

The churches' delegation for the meeting with the Prime Minister reflected the plurality of churches in the Hungarian context. Under the leadership of Péter Cardinal Erdő (Roman Catholic), Bishop Dr Gusztáv Bölcskei (Reformed) and the Ecumenical Council in Hungary, the delegation included representatives from the Roman Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist and Orthodox Churches in Hungary. Due to the specific tradition in Hungary, the delegation also included representatives from the Jewish community. The European church bodies were represented by Director Rev Rüdiger Noll of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the General Secretary of the Commission of Bishops' Conferences in the European Community (COMECE), Fr Dr Piotr Mazurkiewicz. [Back to top](#)

Palestinian children record life in their village

The Palestinian children's parents are traditionally sheep and goat farmers. But the photographs show few goats. Instead there are rabbits. The families used to earn money from tending olive trees; they grew their own food and fodder and had land to graze animals. The Israeli settlement overlooking the village has changed life: the settlers have taken land used for grazing and damaged ancient olive groves. The animals cannot thrive so there is little goat meat to eat. Now the children eat rabbits.

The children were given disposable cameras and have captured simple images of childhood, families, friends and animals. The photographs have been collated by human rights observers working with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), a programme set up by the World Council of Churches and run by Quakers in Britain and Ireland on behalf of the churches and church organisations. The observers, known as ecumenical accompaniers (EAs), work with Palestinians and Israelis to promote non violence, monitor human rights abuses and advocate for an end to the Israeli occupation.

The children live in Yanoun, twenty kilometres south east of Nablus. The village is overlooked on three sides by an Israeli settlement which is illegal under international law. The human rights observers live in the village because in 2002 after years of harassment by settlers who assaulted the men, mutilated their animals and destroyed their crops, all 300 people fled to a nearby town. The few families who have returned say they will only stay while the EAs stay. Yanoun mayor Rashed Murrar says of EAs: "You are the medicine for our children and old people. They see you and they feel better."

The EAs support Israeli and Palestinian peace activists. Speakers at the reception included representatives from Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions and New Profile, an anti-militarist Israeli peace group.

The EAPPI has support across the churches. The Bishop of Bath and Wells, Peter Price supporting the reception said: "I have witnessed at first hand the gradual disintegration of normal life in the West Bank and Gaza over the past ten or so years. This is as a result of political intransigence, and lack of due regard for human dignity. Human beings are made in the image of God be they Jew or Arab, Muslim, Christian or of other or no faiths. They have also the gift of life in order to be able to honour, serve, and seek the succour of God and their neighbour. People can only do this fully when their true humanity is recognised, and their liberty guaranteed. The denial of these rights in the occupied territories remains a deep scar on the body of humankind."

"Everyday life in the Occupied Territories" was hosted by Tom Brake, Liberal Democrat MP for Carshalton and Wallington and Paul Burstow, Minister of State for Care Services and Liberal Democrat MP for Sutton and Cheam.

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Christians 'indispensable' to Middle East societies

A leading commentator on Middle East issues has said that faith and civic leaders in the region have a responsibility to challenge "regimes that muzzle and polarise their peoples" along with the "religious totalitarianism" that fuels violence, discrimination and hatred towards minorities.

Writing on the website of the religion and society think-tank Ekklesia, which promotes nonviolence and conflict transformation, Dr Harry Hagopian says that the Middle East as a whole "stands on shifting sands" because of the interconnected growth in toxic religiosity and rejectionist politics.

But although the situation is serious, with murderous attacks against Christians and others, Dr Hagopian says that a fragile hope remains. "The overwhelming majority of ordinary Arab men and women of all persuasions - Christians, Sunnis, Shi'is, Kurds, Druze, Baha'is and others - are inherently decent people who simply wish to earn their daily bread and are eager to co-exist with their neighbours."

This is why, he suggests, popular movements to challenge top-down political rule and concerted efforts by faith communities "to educate their peoples to accept and respect the other, rather than kill or ostracise" are both vital.

In his research essay, 'Politics, Religion and the Middle East', Dr Hagopian (an ecumenical, legal and political consultant who is a former executive secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches) unpacks eight factors which are exacerbating the drift towards violent exclusionism and the marginalisation of minority communities in the region.

These are the decay of secular Arab nationalism, the brutal suppression of freedom and dissent, the feeding of regressive religious radicalism, the distorted and hegemonic policies of some Western countries, the failure to address the Israel-Palestine question justly, an inhospitable environment that alienates Arab Christians from others, wrangling and abuses of power within religious communities, and the aim of movements such as al-Qa'eda in provoking a confrontation between the Arab world and the West.

It is the combination of these factors, rather than blaming any one in isolation, which is so important, says Dr Hagopian. "Middle East Christians remain an indispensable alloy in the fabric of Arab societies. Historically predating Islam, they have as much claim to the region as any other religion, ethnicity or belief. They are co-equal citizens with their Muslim compatriots, with Jews in Israel and with those in the occupied Palestinian lands."

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Interfaith Harmony Week to be celebrated

The annual observation of a world-wide Interfaith Harmony Week has been scheduled for the first seven days of February beginning in 2011. One of the groups that has endorsed the initiative was a global consultation of Muslim and Christian organizations addressing the topic "Transforming Communities" in November 2010. The consultation was convened at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva and was jointly sponsored by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Islamic Call Society and A Common Word.

In his opening speech of the meeting in Geneva on 4 November, Jordanian Prince Ghazi Bin Muhammad bin Talal invited participating organizations to become involved in the UN-supported Interfaith Harmony Week. The prince observed that "His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein proposed before the United Nations General Assembly the establishment of a World Interfaith Harmony Week." On 20 October, the UN General Assembly unanimously approved the resolution and adopted the first week of February as Interfaith Harmony Week. Prince Ghazi described the concept as "an idea which epitomizes the best of what this conference is striving to do." The Transforming Communities conference members agreed to support and commit themselves to promote the initiative.

The goal of the interfaith week, which is to be celebrated each year in February, is to recognize "the imperative need for dialogue among different faiths and religions in enhancing mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation among people," according to the UN resolution, which is posted on the [World Interfaith Harmony Week website](#).

"This is an important time for all of us involved in interfaith dialogue," said the Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches. "By recognizing this week in our faith communities through prayer, public statements and other expressions we will move toward promoting inter-religious and intercultural dialogue. This is

vital in times when there are many who seek to divide people of faith instead of finding ways to enhance our lives together through the elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination." The effort has received wide-spread support including endorsements from religious and political leaders around the world.

Events being held around the world include interfaith luncheons in Australia, prayers for peace and bell ringing in Austria, inter-religious seminars in Pakistan, and an interfaith breakfast in Canada with Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Lutheran and Hindu leaders. "We invite the member churches of the WCC to celebrate this week of interfaith harmony by reaching out to people of other faiths in their communities and thus showing the love of God and love of neighbour, the primary themes of the week," Tveit said. [Back to top](#)

The health check of intermediate ecumenical life in England

The Review Team are very grateful for the hundreds of responses already received to the survey of the state of relations between Christian churches in the cities and counties. They hope for many more replies between now and the end of February, as the success of the survey and the reliability of its results depend on broad and widespread participation. So, you are urged to spend maybe 10 minutes completing the questionnaire at www.cte.org.uk/ICreview [Back to top](#)

Salvation Army elects new General

The Salvation Army has announced its new world leader and the 19th General will be Canadian-born Commissioner Linda Bond. Commissioner Bond becomes the third woman and the fourth Canadian to hold the post of General of The Salvation Army since the international church and charity organisation was founded 146 years ago. The commissioner, who currently heads up the church and registered charity's work in the Australian Eastern Territory, was elected by The High Council of The Salvation Army made up of senior leaders from around the world who met in Sunbury-on-Thames near London.

Commissioner Linda Bond (64) will have the title General-Elect until she succeeds the current world leader General Shaw Clifton, who retires at the beginning of April. Once in post as General of The Salvation Army, the commissioner will become the head of more than one million Salvationists in 123 countries. The Salvation Army also has more than 100,000 employees who between them communicate in 175 different languages. [Back to top](#)

New Leader marks new beginnings for The Corrymeela Community

The Corrymeela Community, Northern Ireland's leading peace building organisation, has appointed a new Leader to take it into the next decade. Following the death of its Leader and Chief Executive Dr David Stevens last May, the Community has appointed Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal OBE, as his successor.

Kate Pettis MBE, Interim Leader of the Corrymeela Community said, "Inderjit brings to us gifts in abundance. His life's work, informed by Christian principles, has been centred on peace building and is evidenced in his commitment to the building of inter-faith relationships and to working for the achievement of racial justice. We believe our vision for the future which inspired the creation of Corrymeela is safe in his hands and we look forward to his leadership."

A Methodist minister, theologian and former President of the British Methodist Conference, Dr Bhogal has been Chief Executive of the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum and United Faiths - its youth council - since 2005. Inderjit is also the Chair and founder of the much acclaimed City of Sanctuary, a national movement committed to building a culture of welcome and hospitality for people seeking sanctuary in the UK.

Of accepting the role, Inderjit said "David has left a great legacy. I am privileged to succeed him and delighted to accept his role. Diversity is much more complex now. Future peace in Northern Ireland will grow from the ability of people from many different traditions to accommodate their differences and build on their similarities. I am looking forward to life and ministry in Northern Ireland and being part of the future of Corrymeela." [Back to top](#)

Poverty of Ambition? Churches and a Politics of Hope

At a conference at Carrs Lane United Reformed Church, Birmingham, on January 22, hosted by the Joint Public Issues Team of the United Reformed Church, the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Methodist Church, journalist and commentator Will Hutton spoke about what it means to work towards a fair society and what this may mean for taxation and media standards. Andrew Stunell MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, addressed the question of what 'The Big Society' means for local communities. Revd Kirsty Thorpe, Co-Moderator of the United Reformed Church, drew the conference to a close by reflecting on what it means for Churches to be committed to a politics of hope.

The conference examined how churches can engage with contemporary political issues. A particular focus was how churches can respond to the cuts announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review and how this relates to the coalition's concept of Big Society. There were a range of workshops aimed at experienced policy professionals, enthusiasts and people who simply want to know more. Workshop topics included:

- What do our churches and politicians believe about poverty?

- Acting on debt - practical suggestions for churches
- Climate change - international agreement or technological change?
- Peacemaking - nationally, locally, internationally
- Big society - opportunity or threat?
- Practical hints for lobbying your MP
- How do I get my church interested in public issues?

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Church leaders to ask David Cameron to Pledge to Close the Gap

On 31 January, church leaders of all denominations gathered in Westminster and made a public Pledge: that their churches will spend the next three years working to tackle UK poverty and inequality.

At the start of Poverty & Homelessness Action Week, national leaders from all the UK's largest denominations were at 10 Downing Street, accompanied by MPs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty, and representatives of the charity Church Action on Poverty.

They handed in a letter to David Cameron, expressing their commitment to Close the Gap between rich and poor, and asking about the Coalition Government's plans to do the same. In the letter, they say:

As Christians in leadership positions within our respective denominations and organisations, we consider it is our duty to speak up on behalf of the poorest and most vulnerable – especially at a time when they are suffering the consequences of the economic crisis and public spending cuts...

We understand the many pressures you are under, and that the Coalition is committed to reducing the public deficit over the current parliament. But tackling inequality is not something that can be put off for the 'good times.'

We would therefore like to invite you – and your fellow ministers in the Coalition Government – to make a public Pledge to take action to close the gap between rich and poor in the UK.

The leaders who have signed the letter are:

- Rt Revd David Walker, Bishop of Dudley, on behalf of the Church Urban Fund
- Revd Sivakumar Rajagopalan, Regional Minister(Racial Justice) of London Baptist Association, on behalf of the Baptist Union
- Paul Marriott, Chief Executive of Depaul UK, on behalf of Vincentians in Partnership
- Frances Ballin National Executive member of the Roman Catholic National Justice and Peace Network
- Revd Leo Osborn, President-Designate of Methodist Conference, on behalf of the Methodist Church
- Christy-Anna Errington, Methodist Youth President, on behalf of the Methodist Church
- Revd Frank Kantor, Secretary for Church and Society, United Reformed Church
- Niall Cooper, National Coordinator of Church Action on Poverty

David Walker, Bishop of Dudley and trustee of the Church Urban Fund, commented:

The God who meets us in Jesus, calls us to meet and serve each other, yet the gap between the well off and the poor has become so wide that few bridge it. Unless we work to 'Close the Gap', the vision of a Big Society will never get off the drawing board.

The event marks the launch of a major three-year campaign for Church Action on Poverty: Pledge to Close the Gap. We are asking churches and Christians everywhere to follow the example of these church leaders, and make their own Pledges to Close the Gap. We'll be offering a range of simple Pledges for people to make, in three areas: Give, Act and Pray. The campaign will go live during Poverty & Homelessness Action Week, with online Pledges at www.church-poverty.org.uk, a major publicity campaign in the church press, and Pledge actions at church events throughout the year.

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Repair Grants to Church Buildings

The National Churches Trust awards grant funding to places of worship in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man for essential structural repair projects and the installation of new facilities. Repair Grants of £10,000 and above and Community Grants of between £5,000 and £25,000 are available.

Applications are accepted from listed and unlisted churches, chapels and meeting houses of any age, as long as they are open (or planning to reopen) for public worship and where the congregation is a member or associated member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

The closing date for receipt of applications for grants in 2011 is 1 September for more details go to www.nationalchurchestrust.org

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New Housing Group visits Milton Keynes

The new city of Milton Keynes is 40 years old. How has the 'church' engaged with 'new housing'? Are there specific lessons from MK for the wider church? Some members of the Churches Group for New Housing Areas thought that it would be good to visit, listen, reflect and write - even if for short time and in a small area.

MK still expanding

MK is 40 years old but still expanding greatly. The 237k population is projected to be 400k. The main areas of new housing growth are on the east and west sides of the city. Ross Northing, Vicar of the established town of Stony Stratford at the north end of MK, is also Rector of Calverton, a hamlet of 150 souls with a medieval church. The projected new population here is 16,000 and the new housing area will be larger than the old town.

Sense of identity

We heard that many people living in MK have a strong sense of identity with MK as a 'good place to be'. People frequently move house e.g. 4 times in 7 years, but it often within MK itself. MK 'identity' and 'networks' across the city are important (more than in the local grid squares). The church also has strong networks across the city: eg 'Bridge-builders' in schools; Environment Group; Homeless care etc. Although the sense of identity with MK is strong, issues of mobility and commitment make 'building community' difficult (see later).

New church buildings

In response to the enormous housing programme of the 70's and 80's, a large number of shared church buildings were built with community facilities. Often sponsored by several denominations, they were LEP's (Local Ecumenical Projects or Partnerships). We visited 'Christ the Cornerstone' in the city centre, and heard: 'We cannot replicate the church planting of the 1980's with the resources we have now. We are very grateful for all that has been given in the past and need to 'up the act' of our congregation to reach out to new areas now'.

Changed worldview

MK was designed with a modernist 1960's view – which has changed. 'Our major issues are the changing social environment, the un-churched, changing ecumenical scene, the new vision of living responsibly, economic pressures and the impetus of 'how to be church?', says Mary Cotes, Ecumenical Moderator for MK. 'We are engaging in Fresh Expressions and pioneer ministers and the question of new church buildings is both yes and no. The idea to re-enact the 60's/70's master plan "no", but new independent churches and ethnic churches may say "yes" as renting community buildings: some have sought land in new build areas'.

Nature of the congregation changed

'The nature of the congregation has changed dramatically' says James Cassidy who has returned to the same RC church as parish priest for a second time. 'The Population in the 1980's was fairly homogeneous - but now we have 47 nations represented at Mass. The transient population was illustrated when I found that only 12 families remembered me when I returned in 2002'.

Mobility

People in MK move house by a factor of 40% more than in other parts of the country. Last summer 30 Primary Schools had vacancy for Head, and a family centre built in April 2010 is already looking for its second manager. This issue of high mobility raises lots of problems for continuity, especially for volunteer based organizations like the church trying to provide outreach facilities.

Commitment

Another challenge is the geographical spread and 'lack of consistency' of people for regular commitment. 'Consumerism means that people want things provided for them, without much personal cost and commitment'. People respond to one off events rather than ongoing activities. In addition, women's roles have changed; many families cope with issues of separation; 'the car is key', and local activities suffer when people travel elsewhere to get what they want – which is another challenge for a new local church congregation.

Schools and church

A major theme we heard was the importance of schools and church working together on new estates. Schools seemed generally keen for this and appreciated the voluntary help of Christians in many capacities. The Watling Valley Ecumenical partnership, for example, has good working relationships with every school in their area. We visited 'Christ the Sower' school and heard about 'partnership', from the chaplain Nick Adlem.

Partnership

We kept hearing about the importance of partnership and inter-agency work and networks, especially for children's, school, family and church work, but also for Local Authorities, planners. We heard examples, eg Age UK, the Parks and Police. This raises questions of personnel, and the capacity for many Christians who feel called to create community with the pressures of 'mobility' and 'commitment' above.

'Going with the flow'

'Capacity' raised the question of 'following the organic' growth. Good working relationships lead to networks and partnership which are mutually beneficial, but may mean developing activities which did not fit a previous plan or intention - often leading to a change of direction. This can be good, but providing 'consistency' can be difficult.

Making the most of given resources

We heard of St Giles Tattenhoe - a very small 'box pew' 1540's chapel with no electricity until 2007, which stood in open fields with a local population of 12 people, until surrounded by new housing. A church planting group had previously met in the training room at Morrison's supermarket as part of the Watling Valley Ecumenical Partnership. After several years St Giles church now has regular congregations offering a range of worship opportunities.

Ongoing questions we heard from local church leaders:

1. How do church, school and community networks fit in the 'current 'big society' agenda?
2. How can the worship reflect the diversity of people present?
3. Partnership is key: but how can it be sustained in a mobile population?

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The Lighting of the Benedictine Torch

The Benedictine Torch carries a message of peace, hope and fraternity. In 1964, when Saint Benedict was proclaimed Patron of Europe, it was decided that the lighting of a torch would take place to represent European unity. The torch is now known simply as the Torch of Saint Benedict. Following 1992, the year of the Maastricht Treaty and the European Union, it has also become a symbol of peace. Saint Benedict was chosen as the symbol and Saint to testify to the common Christian cultural roots which the 27 European Countries share. The firing of the torch represents the light of Saint Benedict which spans over Europe bringing peace, fraternity and friendship.

Since 1980, the 1500th anniversary of the birth of Saint Benedict, the torch has retraced the path of Benedictine spirituality in the main European locations. Many cities across the globe have also been involved over the past thirty years, including Jerusalem and New York. The latter was of crucial importance to strengthen the Benedictine message of peace, after the threat and the fear following the September 11 attacks on the Twin Towers, in 2001.

Every year the Torch has been the main feature of a pilgrimage beginning from the city chosen to light the torch and ending in Montecassino at the Shrine of St Benedict. This year the Torch will be lit in London on 2 March 2011 at a special service in Westminster Abbey, which houses the Shrine of St Edward the Confessor. The service will be led by the Dean of Westminster, and the Archabbot of Montecassino will give an address alongside the Bishop of Wakefield, who is Chairman of Governors of the Anglican Centre in Rome. Representatives of European Institutions and the Italian Government will also be present alongside other political and religious institutions as this ecumenical celebration takes place. This is the first year in which the torch has been lit in a non Roman Catholic church.

All are warmly invited to attend this Service, for which complimentary tickets are needed. To apply for tickets please contact Mr M. Arnoldi on matthew.arnoldi@westminster-abbey.org or by post at The Chapter Office, 20 Dean's Yard, Westminster, SW1P 3PA.

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Women's World Day of Prayer

On Friday March 4th 2011 women from around the world will celebrate the Women's World Day of Prayer. The service has been written by the women of Chile. It is an appropriate theme for bread is eaten at every meal and is very much part of every day life. The women of Chile offer what it means to them as they share this service with us.

Jean Hackett, president of the National Committee of the Women's World Day of Prayer Movement, said:

'This is always an exciting day as a great wave of prayer sweeps the world, beginning when the first service is held in Tonga and continuing around the world until the final service takes place, some 35 hours later, in neighbouring Western Samoa. By then the day will have been celebrated in over 170 countries and over 5,000 services will have been held in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.'

Stretching from Peru to Antarctica, the Republic of Chile occupies a long, narrow strip of land 2,640 miles long and 110 miles wide. It is a land of incredible contrasts. It also has the highest incidence of domestic violence in Latin America and most women suffer from discrimination in some form or other. Equal opportunities are being pursued. Although organised and led by women, this is essentially a day of prayer for everybody as we demonstrate our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other countries and all are welcome to attend. Further information and resources, together with details of services in your area, can be found on the WWDP website at www.wwdp-natcomm.org

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Grow Zones

The secret to growing food in your own garden isn't about expert knowledge, space or time – it is about doing it with a group of friends and helping one another get started. Grow Zones, a national community growing project, brings people together locally to help one another grow fruit and vegetables in their own gardens.

Imagine a harvest of delicious fresh fruit and vegetables, grown by you in your garden. Our first thoughts might be the hard work and time, the pests, or not knowing where to start? Grow Zones has been created to address the challenges facing a new grower with little time, little knowledge and little space. The Grow Zones approach is simple. A team gather, share ideas and expertise, and help one another plan their growing season. They then get together for an easy schedule of Saturday morning visits to each others gardens. Everyone brings any useful tools they have for the jobs that morning and something to share for lunch. The host gets everyone to work on tasks they have planned for their garden, and the morning ends with a real sense of accomplishment and a shared meal.

Grow Zones introduces permaculture as an approach to growing fruit and vegetables in a way that gives a bountiful harvest and is more in harmony with nature. Rather than working against nature, simple permaculture principles help save money, time and energy. Participants gain new knowledge and learn new skills, enjoying a sense of achievement, new friendships, and a harvest of their own fresh locally grown fruit and vegetables. Gardening is a healthy activity that positively contributes to our physical and mental health. The Grow Zones learning style encourages confidence and self-esteem, and helps gardening to become a truly absorbing and energising activity that can take us into a beautiful action-based learning spiral, while providing a meditative and relaxing experience; a way to forget about the concerns of life and develop resilience to stress.

Research has shown that despite much talk about 'growing your own' in recent years and the rising cost of food, only about 3% of fruit and vegetables consumed in the UK come from gardens and allotments and this figure has been relatively constant across the last four years*. Grow Zones equips people with resources, skills, knowledge and support to overcome the obstacles to 'growing your own', making the prospect of growing fruit and vegetables in your own garden a less burdensome, more enjoyable prospect that will also save you money.

Grow Zones teams are springing up all over the country, bringing people together to help one another get growing fruit and vegetables in their own gardens this year. Thanks to support from the Big Lottery Fund's Local Food scheme teams are resourced with the Grow Zones Kit that guides and supports them through the process from start to finish. Chris Sunderland said: "The Grow Zones Kit has been developed to help teams get organised and growing without necessarily having any expert knowledge. At the beginning the project was a way to get people growing their own food and to introduce permaculture practically, but it has proved to be an amazing friendship and community forming project too. It seems easier for people to make friends over shared work."

"The Grow Zones kit provides people with all they need to start a Grow Zones team -insurance is even included, along with beautifully designed booklets and a DVD." To order a kit and to find out more about starting a Grow Zones in your area visit www.growzones.com [Back to top](#)

Lead Academy Taster Day

Lead Academy (www.leadacademy.net) is a relationally based organisation that uses a distinctive and creative approach to equipping leaders and enabling churches fulfil their vision.

A 2 year interactive journey uses specialized learning communities to connect churches and leaders together. Participants benefit from each other's experience and together work through the challenges and opportunities of leading churches in a 21 Century context. Benefiting from an extensive background in church leadership locally, nationally and in a wider international context, the Lead Academy team are able to utilise the resources of some of the most innovative Christian thinkers and practitioners available.

With a rapidly growing interest in Lead Academy from churches, denominations and organisations a specific event has been arranged for all those interested in discovering a bit more about what's on offer. You will get a 'taste' of what to expect in terms of style, approach, content and programme.

- Hear from leaders who have already attended a Learning Community
- Specialist input from a guest speaker
- Group exercises
- Opportunity to network with others who share similar vision and values
- Q & A

The taster day will be held at CPAS (Church Pastoral Aid Society) Leamington Spa on Tuesday 1 March 2011 from 10.30 – 15.00 hrs. Cost is just £10.00 per person which includes refreshments and a light lunch. Numbers are strictly limited and pre-registration is essential.

For more information and to book, please go to www.leadacademy.net/events

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Cherie Blair's support for Liverpool Seafarers Centre

Cherie Blair has given her support to Liverpool Seafarers Centre, the registered charity in the heart of Liverpool's docklands, which exists to support seafarers and the vital work they do. There has been a Seafarers Mission in Liverpool since 1856, and the work that started back then is still carried out at the Liverpool Centre, a stone's throw from the docks.

Cherie Blair comments:

"The maritime industry is a lifeline to the UK, and the support we give to seafarers is vital. Liverpool Seafarers Centre works on the frontline to give seafarers respite from weeks, even months at sea, away from home and loved ones, and to provide the resources to link families spread across the globe. I grew up in my grandparents' house, where my grandfather, a merchant seaman, was away at sea for weeks at a time, so I know how difficult that separation can be for everyone in the family. I know, too, how important the Docks and its seafaring heritage are to the City of Liverpool, and that's another reason why I am a great supporter of Liverpool Seafarers Centre and its work."

Liverpool's maritime history is world-famous. But now, more than ever before, we are reliant in the UK upon seafarers. 95% of UK trade is transported by sea. Thanks to seafarers, we have vital supplies of food and oil, and a thousand other essential items. Without the work of seafarers, the UK would starve in three weeks. But in delivering these things to us, seafarers pay a heavy price. Dangerous seas, pirates, harsh conditions, loneliness and isolation are just some of the problems seafarers face. They may be away from home for many months at a time, enduring separation from family and loved ones. Liverpool Seafarers Centre provides information and advice, practical help, care and friendship, communications facilities, transport, recreation, and financial aid when necessary.

For further information, please contact John Wilson at Liverpool Seafarers Centre www.liverpoolseafarerscentre.org

Tel: 0300 800 8080

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The Big Lunch: 5th June

The Big Lunch is back with a bang! This years' event is taking place on Sunday 5th June so now's the time to start planning. The 2011 Big Lunch website will go live soon so that you can be the first to register your event and get a handy Organiser's Pack in the post. The packs will give you everything that you need to start planning your event, from invites and recipe ideas to badges and balloons.

In the meantime, please [email](#) or phone 0845 850 8181 if you have any questions, or if you'd like to find out about opportunities to talk about your Big Lunch in the press.

If you intend to hold a big event with over 50 people and you'd like to apply for some funding to help make it possible, the Big Lottery Fund Awards for All scheme could be just what you need. Small grants are given out throughout the year to help people make a difference to their community.

There are certain requirements that you have to meet in order to apply - you must be a community or not for profit group, a Parish or Town Council, a Health body or a school - and to get funding in time for your Big Lunch, you need to get your application in soon. It would be a good activity for a Churches Together group or LEP. It's best to look at the website for further details or call 0845 4 10 20 30.

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