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## **EDITORIAL**

Dear friends of 'Together in Christ' this edition details some significant moves of key personnel and how this will mark a new chapter in the road to unity.

The arrangement of a Personal Ordinariate for the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church demonstrates how these churches are being helped to become established as their congregations have grown.

Canon John O'Toole gives a reflection at Merton for their Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 'The Well is Deep'.

Robin Orton attended the CTE 'High Leigh' conference and reports his impressions of the talks and time with other ecumenical delegates.

Desmond Miller was at Walsingham for the 5<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Marian Pilgrimage in March and shares some of the discussion and celebrations they had there.

Bexley in Kent should be feeling rather blessed. Most of the Christian communities were taking part in a preparation to bring the Holy Spirit to all parts of society using the 3:16 Prayer bus as a focal point in the borough. Gwen Chiosso tells of the part Welling's congregations played.

*Michael*

**HOMILY FOR UNITY SERVICE**  
**Sunday 10 May 2015**  
**St John Fisher RC Church,**  
**Merton for Churches Together in Merton Park.**

First, my thanks to Canon Acton for his very warm welcome and hospitality. It's lovely to be back here in St John Fisher parish where I was an assistant priest for just over three very happy years between 1987 and 1990. It's good to see many familiar faces among the congregation. My thanks too to Deacon Tom and the local ecumenical group who have prepared today's service and celebration. It is a particular joy to welcome clergy and people from the local Christian churches as we give thanks for the unity we already share as brothers and sisters in Christ and as we pray and commit ourselves for the full unity we continue to seek.

We gather just after a General Election. While I was preparing my thoughts last week I was trying to predict the election result. All the polls were saying that the result was too close to call and that no one party was likely to have a majority. Now we know the facts. It was Bismarck who said, 'politics is the art of the possible' and politicians are, by nature, pragmatists. It is perhaps easy for us church people to be suspicious of the motives of politicians and even to be cynical about what they say and what they promise. However, there are some people who say that ecumenism today has itself become the 'art of the possible' and that ecumenical co-operation and even coalitions and pacts are simply our own pragmatic response to the reality of falling numbers across the

mainstream denominations. Given the increasingly secularist society in which we live it can at times feel like we are pulling our wagons together in order to protect ourselves from a world which can be either hostile or, even worse, indifferent. Another route being taken by some, especially with everyone being so busy, is to succumb to the temptation to give up on the ecumenical task completely and to focus solely on one's own patch, one's own tradition and one's own identity and to strive to attract more new members for oneself in the old spirit of competition rather than co-operation and commitment. This may be a bigger problem elsewhere in the world. The materials used for this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, for example, were prepared by churches of Brazil where this market-driven Christianity is a real threat.

Today we give thanks for the ecumenical journey we have travelled as individuals and denominations and our commitment to breaking down the walls of division. This year, 2015, marks the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism and the first formal recognition by the Catholic Church of the gifts and graces bestowed by Christ beyond the communion of the Catholic Church and of the real though as yet imperfect communion that exists between the Catholic Church and other Christians. We have come a long way and have travelled a long road and it is good to remember and give thanks today for all those who have walked the ecumenical path before us and who sowed the seeds, the fruits of which we now reap. We in our turn continue to sow seeds for those who come after us so that, as Psalm 102 says: 'a future generation may praise the Lord.'

The Word of God in the Scriptures unites us as Christians and nourishes and feeds our faith as growing disciples of Christ. So let me offer a brief reflection using two words in the light of the Scripture readings we have just listened to. The two words are mystery and mercy.

First mystery. I was very privileged as a newly ordained priest to have as my parish priest a renowned priest of the Southwark diocese, the late Mgr Canon Edward Mahony. Even when he was alive he was something of a legend. It was said that there was nothing about Catholic education that he didn't know. He had been ordained as a priest in 1943 and I was struck by his ordination card which had on it a prayer from the great 5th century North African bishop, St Augustine of Hippo. The prayer says this: 'O God, may I come to know you and to know myself – and both are mysteries.' It's a good prayer and perhaps a key to unlocking today's Gospel reading of the Samaritan woman – because since God is mystery and we ourselves are mysteries then other people are mysteries too. We human beings judge by appearances but God sees the heart. There is always more to discover and uncover. I am a great Agatha Christie fan but when we Christians use the word mystery we use it not in the terms of an Agatha Christie mystery, namely as something that deliberately baffles and bewilders us. Mystery for us as Christians is not the inexplicable but the inexhaustible. The well is deep. We can always be refreshed at the well of God's love for it is a well that can never be exhausted. Ecumenically, these days, we can rejoice that, like Jesus, we can drink at the wells

of other traditions as well as our own and be refreshed. At one time we wouldn't have dreamt of singing each others' hymns but now we have learnt to sing from the same hymn sheet. We have learnt to drink from each other's buckets.! We can rightly rejoice rather than be threatened by the precious history and gifts of each particular Christian denomination. Jesus challenges us to acknowledge that diversity as well as unity is part of God's design, to approach one another in trust and to see the face of God in the face of all men and women, whoever they may be.

Secondly, mercy. Pope Francis continues to make headlines and has announced that there will be a Year of Mercy in the Catholic Church beginning on 8 December this year, the date that marks fifty years since the closing of the Second Vatican Council back in 1965. Like his earlier Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*), the Bull announcing the Year of Mercy is not just for Catholics but for all Christians and indeed for all people of good will. For a number of years I have been a member of the national Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee (or English ARC) which works to promote greater dialogue and co-operation between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. When we were looking at Pope Francis's document *Evangelii Gaudium* we asked one of the young, bright Anglican clergy on the committee to read it and to give his honest reflections. He remarked that he had often had to teach papal documents, but had always done so out of duty rather than with joy. This was the first papal document that had really excited him and filled him with great enthusiasm. He enjoyed it so much but the

only question he said he had at the end of reading it was: “is the Pope a Catholic?” What had genuinely surprised him was Pope Francis’s stress on how crucial it is for all Christians to have – or, at least, be open to – a close personal relationship with Christ if we are truly to be disciples and so able to become apostles and missionaries of Christ in the world.

The Samaritan woman had a colourful past and, reading between the lines, she not only had many skeletons in her cupboard, but many cupboards. The Scripture scholar Fr Denis McBride invites us to use our imaginations and to picture this woman running back home to her village shouting excitedly, ‘I’ve met a man, I’ve met a man’ with the villagers shaking their heads and thinking, ‘Not again.’ And the woman replies, ‘No, but this one is different’, with the villagers replying, ‘That’s what you said last time!’

It’s a good way in to a familiar and vivid story – which has much to teach us as a model for relating to others. Jesus reaches out to the woman at the well and offers her the love, mercy and compassion of God; yet he does so gently, gradually and naturally and without in any way humiliating or embarrassing her. For her part, the woman journeys to faith. She moves through seeing Jesus as a man and a stranger, to seeing him as a prophet, then to seeing him as Messiah and finally, along with her own people, to seeing him as Saviour of the world. What, for her, began as a chance encounter leads through a respectful dialogue to a personal relationship and then to her accepting Jesus in faith as a disciple and then becoming a missionary to her own people –



indeed, the first missionary mentioned in John's Gospel.

Pope Francis is keen to highlight God's mission of mercy. He speaks of God's mercy as 'a spring that will never run dry, no matter how many people approach it.' He is encouraging us as Christians as we witness together as Good Samaritans in practical ways to the mercy of God in our world. He has famously said that 'ecumenism is too important to be left just to the theologians.' His own rich ecumenical experience in Latin America taught him to prioritise friendships rather than structures and partnerships rather than rivalries. Here in Merton, good and faithful initiatives such as Christian Care for needy families, the Wimbledon Food Bank, Merton Street Pastors and the Merton Winter Night Shelter are practical examples of mission in action that already embody that message of love and mercy. The same Jesus who, in John's Gospel, asked the Samaritan woman for a drink, in Matthew's Gospel says, 'I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink.' Pope Francis invites us as Christians to reach out together beyond ourselves and to live out the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Mercy is the essence of the Gospel and the key to Christian life. Indeed, the whole of the Christian Gospel can be summed up in five words – "You did it to me."

John O'Toole

**THE ECUMENICAL LANDSCAPE**  
**CHANGING SEASONS – EXPANDING HORIZONS**

That was the theme of the conference for ecumenical officers held at High Leigh conference centre in Hertfordshire last November, which I was privileged to attend on behalf of the Archdiocese of Southwark Christian Unity Commission. I thought readers of *Together in Christ* might be interested to hear about some of the main themes which emerged and some of the things which particularly struck me personally.

Over a hundred people attended the conference. I found it very exciting (and very humbling) to be able to be able to listen to and talk to so many committed, experienced, learned and wise ecumenists.

I think the majority of those present were clergy rather than laity. The vast majority were certainly aged over fifty and many, like me, clearly much older. And I got the impression, which may be wrong, that the majority of them were based in rural rather than urban areas. There were only two or three non-white people. I counted fourteen Roman Catholics, including our very own Bishop Paul Hendricks.

The conference was partly structured round the fact that 2014 was the fiftieth anniversary of the first ‘Faith and Order’ conference in Britain, held in Nottingham, followed one month later by the promulgation of the Second Vatican Council’s decree on ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*. (Everyone found the latter title quite a tongue-twister, although Bishop Paul claimed to have mastered it, after much practice!)

Bishop Paul gave a well-received talk on 'The significance of *Unitatis redintegratio* for ecumenism today.' He covered ground with which readers of *Together in Christ* will be familiar, and concluded by commending spiritual ecumenism as ecumenism's heart and receptive ecumenism as its soul. He recognised the barriers to organic unity which still remained, but quoted the leading ecumenical scholar Paul Murray: 'Christian hope, unlike optimism, is not a form of reality denial.'

One particular very interesting detail which emerged from Bishop Paul's talk and the subsequent discussion was that was that the term 'ecclesial communities' was first suggested for inclusion in *Unitatis redintegratio* not by the original drafters but by the ecumenical observers, whom the Council Fathers had asked how they would like those post-Reformation denominations who did not regard themselves as 'churches' to be referred to. Conversely, it was also pointed out that none of the Council documents stated that such denominations could *not* be considered 'churches' (although more recent documents from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith have done so.)

We were told about the 1964 Nottingham 'Faith and Order' conference was chiefly concerned with the way in which disunity compromised the churches' *mission*. It was a very 'Protestant' affair – ten places were reserved for Roman Catholic observers, but the pre-Conciliar mindset of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England meant that only six were given permission to attend. How might things have been different if *Unitatis redintegratio* had come out before rather than after the conference?

The most spectacular outcome of the Nottingham conference was the covenant that was made between participating churches to achieve unity by Easter 1980. This was not of course achieved (although, if for example the original Anglican/Methodist unity proposals had not been narrowly defeated in the Church of England General Synod, it might have been) and to that extent 'Nottingham was a cul-de-sac'. It was clear nevertheless that what many people at our conference felt was the most frustrating element in the current apparent lack of ecumenical progress was the failure to achieve mutual recognition of ordained ministries (though perhaps to some extent this reflected the fact that the majority of those present were clergy?)

There was much discussion of how the 'landscape' of British Christianity had changed since 1964. We were told of how two accounts of this had been offered by academics.

One is that during the 'long sixties' (1958-1975), when the institutions and values of the traditional establishment (of which the churches were one) were increasingly challenged and undermined, Britain had ceased being a Christian state. This was reflected in the fact that the slow decline in church attendance and in the numbers of Christian baptisms, confirmations, marriages and ministerial vocations (affecting all denominations), which had been in progress, with some temporary remissions, since the beginning of the century, speeded up dramatically. This was not really a theological crisis (as it is sometimes presented) but a moral one – the British population lost confidence, and indeed interest, in what the churches had to offer.

The other account points out that this phenomenon characteristically affected only the established denominations. The Christian landscape had (dramatically) changed rather than contracted. There had been, and continued to be, a very large increase in the numbers of people worshipping in Pentecostal churches (indigenous as well as imported), black-led and black majority churches (driven to some extent by the failure of the established denominations to welcome and integrate increasing numbers of Christian immigrants), and new evangelical or charismatic churches such as Ichthus and Vineyard.

Pentecostal churches had, historically, been resistant to formulating creedal statements. Many of them however were now becoming increasingly 'self-analytical' and less defensive, and were prepared to involve themselves in theological dialogue with other traditions, including the sixth phase of the ongoing (since 1972!) dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church.

As well as obvious cultural differences, there were also differences in theological style between some of the newer evangelical or charismatic churches (including some black-led churches), and the established denominations. For example, some of them were suspicious of the 'theology of suffering' and inclined to what was sometimes called the 'prosperity gospel'. There might well be scope for ecumenical discussions on these issues; some of them could reflect sociological and cultural factors rather than purely theological ones.

Receptive ecumenism featured quite prominently in our discussions. Marcus Stock of the Centre for

Catholic Studies at Durham University told us about a large project (funded largely by a ‘local left-wing Catholic family’) he had run on behalf of all the major churches in the north-east of England. The aim was to encourage each denomination to identify its own dysfunctions and explore what could be found in other traditions which might help them deal with them. One of the things which emerged from the study is the similarities of the problems facing all the different denominations. There was one glaring (but perhaps not unexpected) exception: when asked whether they had been offered the opportunity of making any contribution to the governance of the church, far more Roman Catholic lay people said ‘no’ than those of any other denomination.

Apparently the URC at regional level have accepted the recommendations of the project report addressed to them and are implementing them. The local Roman Catholic diocese has set up an internal working group to consider greater lay involvement. The recommendations addressed to them include an invitation to consider what they could usefully receive from the Anglican and Methodist traditions in terms of lay involvement in church governance, and to consider what the experience of female deacons in the Church of England could offer the Roman Catholic Church.

I asked whether Marcus could offer any advice of how the principles of receptive ecumenism could be applied at a more grass-roots level. I was slightly disappointed when all he came up with was that any local project would need the full ‘ownership’ of all the churches involved – and would need a lot of hard work! Apparently however Churches Together in England are planning to set up a web page giving

information about resources available for receptive ecumenism at a local level.

I wish there had been more about spiritual ecumenism. We heard about some large and apparently successful 'spiritual' ecumenical events (joint pilgrimages, courses about different traditions of prayer etc) but these need enthusiastic and energetic people to organise them. I would have liked to have more advice about more modest projects, for example, getting small groups of people together from the different traditions to read Scripture together and to pray for Christian unity and the needs of the local community. But I am sure there are resources 'out there' which I could find if I looked.

At the conference we prayed together twice a day, in a wide range of different styles. For example, an Orthodox priest, Fr George, led us in a form of morning prayer used by Orthodox families in their homes. He suggested we all join in 'so far as conscience allows' (there was a lot of Marian material). That seemed to me to be quite a good formula for using in ecumenical prayer. (Fr George said he had not himself felt able to join in a prayer offered at one of our previous prayer services to 'Father Mother God'!)

Robin Orton

## **An Ecumenical Pilgrimage**

The fifth Ecumenical Marian Pilgrimage to Walsingham took place in March this year. It is a biennial event and I have been blessed to attend them all. It is organised by the Ecumenical Marian Pilgrimage Trust with the support of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Catholic League, the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius and the Society of St John Chrysostom.

We were comfortably accommodated at the Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and many of the events took place in the Shrine church though services were also held in the other places of worship in Little Walsingham.

Pilgrims came from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, India, Finland, Portugal, and Australia representing Anglo-Catholic, Church of England, Methodist, Presbyterian, United Reform, Quakers, and Roman Catholic Churches; the Eastern tradition was represented by members of the Antiochian, Coptic (British Orthodox), Greek, Indian Malankara, and Melkite Orthodox Churches.

The programme was a rich mixture of prayer, meditation, and study. Each day there was a communal celebration of the Eucharist according to a different tradition with the possibility to attend one's own specific Eucharist in addition before breakfast. The morning programme began with a short scripture meditation, followed by one of the formal talks, and finally a communal celebration of the Eucharist.

A Holy Communion Service took place in the historic Methodist Chapel on the first afternoon celebrated by the Revd Adam Stevenson – the Revd Dr David Cornick preached. I had been led to believe



that John Wesley preached in this Chapel, but reading the literature on-line I learn that the Methodist Society was founded in Walsingham in 1779 and was visited by John Wesley in 1781 when he preached in Friday Market. A small Methodist chapel was built in 1782, but replaced by the present fine Georgian church 1794.

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts was celebrated by Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokaleia in the Greek Orthodox Church of St Seraphim – they do not celebrate the full Liturgy during Lent, but a service based on Vespers with Holy Communion.

This building is a chapel of ease within the Russian Orthodox Parish of the Holy Transfiguration, Great Walsingham. The Orthodox presence in Walsingham dates back to 1966, when the Anglican shrine dedicated one of its upstairs chapels to Orthodox worship. The following year, the Russian Orthodox Priest assigned to the Anglican shrine, along with three companions, set up residence in the former railway station, establishing a religious community dedicated to the great 19th century Russian mystic, St Seraphim. The building has been enhanced by a dome and a cross, and an icon of Christ in majesty above the main entrance, and contains an iconostasis.

For the Roman Catholic service Bishop Alan Hopes, newly appointed to East Anglia, celebrated a sung Mass in the Reconciliation Chapel. This fine chapel which opens to the concourse was begun in 1980 and consecrated in 1982 when the relics of Saint Laurence of Rome (martyred 258), Saint Thomas Becket (martyred 1170), and Saint Thomas More (martyred 1535) were sealed in the altar.

After lunch we attended *The Raising of Evening Incense* in the Reconciliation Chapel served by Fr Peter Farrington of St Alban's British Orthodox Church, Chatham. I am pleased to say it was chanted in English. From their website I learn that they are a small Orthodox jurisdiction, part of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria whose mission is to the people of the British Isles, and though Orthodox in faith and practice remain British in ethos and in appreciation of the Orthodox heritage of these islands. They were established in 1866 by Jules Ferrette, a former French Dominican priest, who was consecrated bishop by the Syrian Orthodox Church with the purpose of re-establishing Orthodoxy in the West.

It was in the Anglican Parish Church of St Mary's and All Saints that the Rt Revd Jonathan Goodall celebrated and preached at an Anglican Solemn Eucharist. Though the tower of this very fine church dates from the 14th century the original nave from 15th century it was in fact rebuilt between 1961 and 1964 following a disastrous fire on 14 July 1961 when the church was almost completely destroyed. Only the tower, the south porch and the font were spared. What we have now is a stunning modern church.

It was Fr Alfred Hope Patten, vicar here from 1921-58, who rebuilt the Anglican shrine in Walsingham. He had a statue to Our Lady of Walsingham placed in the Guilds Chapel and arranged the first Anglo-Catholic pilgrimage in 1922. The statue was moved to the Anglican Shrine Church when it was completed in 1931.

The talks were all of a high standard. Dr David Cornick spoke on *Mary and Ecumenism*; Professor Morna Hooker on *Holiness*; Metropolitan Kallistos on *Sergius Bulgakov*; Fr George Joy on *The Mother of God in India*; Prebendary Norman Wallwork on *God Incarnate in the Hymns of Charles Wesley*. I comment on just two other talks.

*Four Theological Images from Nagasaki* was given by the Revd Philip Corbett, Vicar of St Stephen's Church, Lewisham. He began by reciting the 'Hail Mary' in Japanese – he was brought-up in Japan. He gave us an overview of the history of Christianity in Japan and of the *Kakure Kirishitan*, the so called Hidden Christians.

Portuguese ships began arriving in Japan in 1543 and Catholic missionaries soon followed. Francis Xavier landed in 1549. In 1597 twenty six Christians were martyred by crucifixion. A systematic persecution began in 1614 and there are around 1,000 known martyrs during the missionary period. Nagasaki remained a christian centre, but eventually the church went into hiding and a small number remained hidden until 1865, when some of those who lived in Urakami village near Nagasaki visited the new Church which had just been built and spoke to the priest saying that their families had kept the Kirishitan faith and wanted to see the statue of St Mary and to be assured that the priest was celibate and truly came from the pope in Rome. It is estimated that there were some 30,000 Kakure Kirishitan the majority of whom renounced their syncretic practices and re-joined the Catholic Church. Those who remain separate are the Hanare Kirishitan.

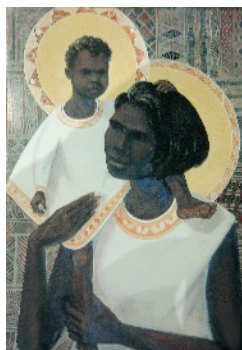
In another talk Sister Marie Farrell RSM. introduced us to the Australian Scene and Aboriginal

Spirituality. Australian society is today a very secular one. The aboriginals were treated very badly in the past, their culture and spirituality being misunderstood and considered pagan. Sister Marie showed how the religion of the aboriginals is a ‘primal’ religion and compared it to that of the Hebrews before they came to know God. They are essentially a very spiritual people with a deep appreciation of nature and a land which is sacred. There is a sense in which they know there is a god or gods who are responsible for creation.

We were introduced to ‘Dadirri – The Spring Within’. To quote from Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr (b.1950, an aboriginal educationalist, writer and artist).

‘*Dadirri* recognises the deep spring inside us. ... When I experience *dadirri* I am made whole again. I can sit on the river bank or walk through the trees. Even if someone close has passed away I can find peace in this silent awareness. There is no need for words. A big part of *dadirri* is listening. ... there are deep springs within each of us. Within this deep spring, which is the very spirit of God, is a sound. The sound of Deep calling to Deep. The sound of the word – Jesus.’

Desmond Miller



#### **THE ABORIGINAL MADONNA**

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, DARWIN NT, AUSTRALIA

An oil painting by M. Karel Kupa of Paris.

The Virgin is depicted with characteristic features and skin colour of an aboriginal woman; dressed in white with aboriginal designs in red. The Holy Child is seated on her shoulder in the usual native manner of carrying a baby. Her face is a composite portrait from many sketches of various sitters from different tribes – the dominant expression is one of sensitive compassion.

## PRAY LOVE BEXLEY

We are fortunate to have in Bexley the umbrella organisation for Churches Together groups, *Transform Bexley Borough* (TBB). TBB's latest project, called *Pray Love Bexley*, was to take prayer out onto the streets of Bexley for 40 days between Easter and Pentecost Sunday using the CRiBS bus, with a view to flooding the area with prayer. CRiBS stands for Christian Resources in Bexley Schools. With the emphasis on spiritual development, CRiBS has been working in Bexley schools since 1993, helping to deliver the Christian element of RE in the Curriculum in an inspired, creative and relevant way. Sometimes the team take the CRiBS bus to a school, but usually it is kept for special events. It is kitted out with lots of useful resources to help people of all ages to focus on prayer.

At the time of writing this, we are almost at Pentecost. The bus has visited each of the seven Churches Together areas for between three and seven days, depending on the number of churches in each area. It was a privilege for my church, St. Stephen's, to be chosen as an ideal site for accommodating the bus whilst in Welling. We are a bit off the main High Street, but right next to the school so plenty of people came past each day. I had originally thought a more visible site might be better, but the organisers felt it should be a lockable car park and there had to be a power supply nearby. It was something of a concern for our parish priest to make sure the site was locked each night, especially when there could be enthusiastic people praying in tongues late into the evening!

Most of the local churches got involved and booked their time slots on the bus. St. Stephen's had a couple of Morning Prayer sessions which I attended, led by our parish priest. It was quite moving to follow the psalms and reading by a Litany for the streets of Welling.

Fr Jim brought a map of Welling onto the bus and mentioned each street by name, to which we all responded: “Lord hear our prayer”. The second morning we also had quite a large group praying the rosary together. What was lovely about the week was the fact that all the different churches were praying in the way that suited them, sometimes separately and sometimes together, but all with the same aim – to pray for the people in their surrounding areas. St. Stephen’s Primary School made use of the bus on two days, with each of the classes having an allotted time on board. Hopefully the children were keen to tell their parents all about it.

It was a lot of work for the organisers and there were a few problems encountered along the way, though nothing major that I heard of. But if it is repeated, people will know what to expect and it should be much easier to arrange everything. It’s a venture which could well become an established part of the Churches Together network locally, if there’s a heart for it, which I believe there is.



**‘3:16’** refers to the quotation from John’s Gospel:  
*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Gwen Chiosso

## APPOINTMENTS AND NEWS

Canon John O'Toole has taken up the role of General Secretary to Bishops' Conference in England and Wales; Department of Dialogue and Unity. He is soon to reach six months in post so expect more from him soon.

Revd Chris Ruddle replaces Revd Harvey Richardson as the County Ecumenical Officer for Churches Together in Kent. He is busy updating the website and publishes an e-briefing each fortnight. You can follow a link at the website to subscribe.

Claire Crowley replaces Revd John Richardson at Churches Together in South London as Ecumenical Officer.

Mgr Timothy Galligan has resigned as Chair of Southwark Diocesan Unity Commission. The hunt is on for his replacement.

The Commission welcomes Mrs Gwen Chiosso as the Secretary for the Officers meetings. In time she may commit to other duties as they occur.

We offer blessings and prayers for them all and wish Fr Timothy, John and Harvey peace and success in their future ministry.

Nationally, Bishop Michael Campbell of Lancaster has, established two Personal Parishes for the Syro-Malabar Church. The Personal Parish of Saint Alphonsa, in Preston, with Fr Mathew Jacob as Parish Priest, will serve Syro-Malabar Catholics in the city.

The Personal Parish of Saints Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Euphrasia, in Blackpool, will serve Syro-Malabar Catholics in the rest of the Diocese.

Thought to be the first Personal Parishes for the Syro-Malabar Church in Europe, the two parishes, will make an invaluable contribution to Church life within the Diocese. The granting of the request by the Bishop is motivated by the need to have a spiritual care of souls and the unity of the Diocese with the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church.

(Extract from Catholic News website.)

