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TOGETHER IN CHRIST



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Archdiocese of Southwark*

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

This time we have Canon John O'Toole's offering of the four "H"s to give light to the way we can go forward together. He reviews the past leading towards progress now, as the churches seek to work closer with each other, healing past differences.

Two voices from the Marian Ecumenical event at Walsingham, in March this year, show how Mary is pointing the way for understanding and valuing our differences. Robin and Desmond tell of Mary's role and how the Walsingham Covenant is stronger than ever.

We thank God for the blessed contribution Barbara Wood has given to the Southwark Christian Unity Commission and wish her success in the future as she finds new challenges to take on, or to enjoy a well earned rest as she deserves.

A report on the visit to the Russian Orthodox Cathedral Abroad in Chiswick describes the splendid richness and opulence given to offer praise to God there. These visits are an opportunity to discover the richness of our fellow Christians' forms of worship.

The Commission spring event in April had a talk from Bishop Paul Hendricks on Receptive Ecumenism and an interview with David Burke, a Street Pastor in Banbury, demonstrating Receptive Ecumenism in action. Both are reproduced here. Our next event is towards the end of September when the theme will be "Walking Together on the Way".

Alessia Cesana attended a Taizé Prayer Meeting in preparation for a joint pilgrimage to Taizé. These meetings offer young adults an introduction to the ecumenical scene, showing God's love to share new forms of prayer and praise, activities and companionship. There is a need for younger people to come forward and be involved in this work. If you are looking for a role in the diocese or just locally, we encourage you to get in touch.

Michael Baldry

The Four Hs

Walking Together: Honesty, Humility & Humour!

The title for my reflection is **Walking Together: Honesty, Humility & Humour** but the fourth and most important **H** is the word **Hope**. Pope Francis often refers to the ecumenical task as ‘walking together on the way.’ The recent agreed ARCIC statement (the Anglican Roman-Catholic International Commission) is entitled ‘*Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be the Church – Local, Regional and Universal.*’ Like a lot of Agreed Statements, it displays a lot of honesty and humility but without much sense of humour. One Anglican reviewer from the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Anglican church, commented that ‘*there is precious little joy in this ARCIC world*’ where walking together is a long journey and a hard slog as we stumble along ‘*through the difficult terrain of a rapidly changing world, staring at the ground footsore and out of breath.*’



It is important that we are realistic and that we don't imagine that we don't face real problems but by taking a wider, longer and deeper view we can, I think, be more positive and even joyful. I recall the words St John Paul II used in his message for the new millennium that we should ‘*remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm and look forward to the future with confidence.*’ Gratitude, enthusiasm and confidence are good Spirit-filled words and they remind us of something that we can so easily forget and that it is that unity is always a *gift* before it is a *task*. Moreover, it is *God's* gift before it is *our* task. It is above all a gift of God's **Spirit** who, as the late Fr Jim Brand used to say, is a divine anti-crowbar.

Crowbars prise things apart but the Spirit draws people together. The word ‘apostle’ means ‘one who is sent.’ When we use the word ‘apostle’ we tend immediately to think first of the 12 apostles but the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of Jesus himself as an ‘apostle’ (Heb 3:1). The Church is apostolic not first because the 12 were sent but because Jesus was sent. He is the Apostle with a capital *A*. He then sent the Spirit who in turn sent the 12 and who continues to send us. We are apostles with a small *a*. It is the Spirit who reminds us that Jesus came to gather together into unity the scattered children of God. That is his mission and ours. Mission is for unity and unity is for mission.

So, we remember the past with gratitude. Many of us here are of an age to remember the days when ecumenism was a matter of conflict and competition before we moved through the other *Cs* of co-existence, co-operation

and commitment on the journey to communion. Saturday 13 April 2019 marked the 190th anniversary of the Catholic Emancipation Act. The playwright John Osborne looked back in anger and Christians of all denominations need to look back in sorrow for how we treated each other in the past following the split in the Church at the Reformation. History is a good teacher of honesty and humility – and also of hope. It is good to recall (and retell) the story of our own diocese and the lay people, religious, deacons, priests and bishops who prayed and worked for unity among the Christian family, often perhaps despite opposition, resistance or indifference and who should not be forgotten. We are reaping what others have sowed and we are called in our turn to sow seeds that others will reap in the future. As St Paul says: *“it is all the same who does the sowing or the watering. It is God who gives the increase.”* (1 Cor 3:6).

We live the present with enthusiasm. The root of the word enthusiasm means ‘in God’ or ‘God is within’ and so it is the Spirit of God who gives us the gifts of life, energy and enthusiasm. It is the same Spirit who gives us the gifts of honesty, humility and humour as we walk together on the way with our Christian brothers and sisters. Pope Francis’s rich ecumenical (and indeed interreligious) experience when he was Archbishop of Buenos Aires taught him to value friendships not structures and partnerships not rivalries. It is where relationships have built up trust that the fruits of honesty, humility and humour grow and flourish.

I work very closely with my colleagues from the other main Christian denominations who serve as National Ecumenical Officers and I can honestly say that the relationships between us are so strong that any one of us could represent all of us. That is a great compliment to our predecessors who established and developed close and strong relationships over the years. I was asking my colleagues recently about what part humour plays in their own tradition. Major David Evans, from the Salvation Army, replied that we couldn’t do this ministry if we didn’t laugh, both about ourselves and with others. He added a true story. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Michael Ramsey, when meeting Fred Coutts, the then General of the Salvation Army, said he had never met an unhappy Salvationist, to which the General replied, *“You can’t have met the ones I’ve met.”*

Humour is able to put things into context, to be able to laugh at ourselves and not to take ourselves too seriously. We should take the serious things lightly and the light things seriously, as Oscar Wilde wisely reminded us. Jesus himself used a lot of irony in his teaching – although I

think it is a shame that, though the Gospels tell us that Jesus wept they don't say explicitly that Jesus laughed. He would have grown up learning the wisdom and humour of his Jewish tradition where humour plays a key part in teaching and learning. My favourite line which I heard many years ago from a lady rabbi was: "*you can make a fool of me once. The second time I am a fool.*"

During the ecumenical commemoration of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017, I was struck by a phrase used by Bishop Martin Lind, the Lutheran bishop in the UK, who co-preached with Archbishop Bernard Longley, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham in a memorable service at St George's Cathedral, Southwark, where I was once fortunate to be the Dean. He said we Christians should cultivate a '**holy jealousy**' for what we admire in another Christian tradition that we do not see so clearly in our own. It is a jealousy for holiness and just as the walls of division do not rise up to heaven, so holiness cuts across all denominations and traditions.

Today this recognition of the gifts of other traditions is increasingly referred to as '**receptive ecumenism**' – where the emphasis has shifted from the instinctive question "*what do I have the others lack, that they need from me if I am to have unity with them?*" to the better question "*what do I lack that others have and that, with honesty and in faithfulness to my own tradition, I can learn and receive if I am to have unity with them?*" St Paul encouraged the early Christians to "*always consider the other person to be better than yourself*" (Rom 12:10) and St Benedict, in Chapter 72 his Rule, encourages his monks not to compete *against* each other but to compete in showing obedience to one another – outdoing each other in mutual esteem.

We look forward to the future with confidence. It is always wise when we are on a journey to keep our eyes on the destination. So, what is the ecumenical destination we are journeying to? Pope Francis spoke a while ago about three false models of communion which we must resist. The first, he says, is to imagine that unity is something that we can achieve by our own efforts. Rather, he says, it is instead a gift that comes from on high and always the work of the Spirit. We are not able to achieve unity by ourselves, nor can we decide its forms and timing. It will come in the Spirit's way and in the Spirit's time. Rather, our task is that of receiving this gift and making it visible to others.

Secondly, unity is not uniformity. Our different traditions, he said, are a wealth for and not a threat to the unity of the Church. Seeking to suppress this diversity is to counter the Holy Spirit who acts by enriching the community of believers with a variety of gifts.

Thirdly, unity is not absorption – or being swallowed up and lost in one big blob, as somebody said to me recently. Rather, no one would have to deny their own history of faith and the gifts of each tradition will be riches to be shared with all. St John Paul II famously said in his 1995 encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (*That they may be One*) on the Catholic Church’s commitment to



Christian Unity that dialogue towards unity is “not simply an exchange of ideas ..[but] always an ‘exchange of gifts’” (par 28). Having identified three false models of communion Pope Francis wisely doesn’t give a true model of communion since he says the destination is in God’s hands. Our task is to walk the journey with trust and hope (the fourth and most important H).

What gives you hope on the ecumenical journey? Which brings me finally to my lamp. This year hopefully we will be celebrating the canonisation of Blessed John Henry Newman. A leading Anglican in the nineteenth century who did much to promote the Catholic tradition within the Church of England, he was received into full communion with the Catholic Church on 9 October 1845. He always dated his own conversion to his acceptance of evangelical Christianity when he was a fifteen-year old and was always grateful for all he had received within the Anglican Church.

In one of his famous hymns, *Lead kindly light*, he speaks of faith not as a leap in the dark but as a step into the light. But, for Newman, faith is a lumen not a lux, a lamp rather than a blinding light. Because it is a lamp, none of us are able to see the distant scene but God gives us just enough light to take the next step on the journey of faith – and if we take that step then there is light for the next step. I like this spirituality of ‘one step enough for me’ and I find it a very good image for our ecumenical journey and for our journey of faith as a whole.

*Lead, kindly Light, amid th’ encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on;
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.*

Canon John O’Toole

Ecumenical Marian Pilgrimage Trust

Walsingham, March 2019

The Ecumenical Marian Pilgrimage Trust held its seventh biennial Pilgrimage to Walsingham from 19 to 22 March this year. It was, as ever, very well organised and most enjoyable. Accommodation and most events are at the Anglican Shrine.

The programme for the day follows an established pattern: 7.30am Roman Catholic Mass in the Church of the Annunciation or the Anglican Eucharist in the Shrine Church and after breakfast a Scriptural Meditation in the Shrine Church. Each day there is a communal Eucharist of a different tradition later in the morning.

On this occasion the Catholic Sung Mass in the Chapel of Our Lady of Reconciliation was celebrated by Archbishop Edward Adams, the Apostolic Nuncio. Another day the Anglican solemn Eucharist was celebrated by Bishop Jonathan Goodall. Holy Communion was celebrated by Rev Dr Richard Clutterbuck in the historic Methodist Chapel. During Lent the Greek Orthodox community do not celebrate the Eucharistic Liturgy during the week, but the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts was served by Archpriest Patrick Hodson in the Church of the Holy Transfiguration.

Other liturgical events included Benediction, the Akathist Hymn chanted before the Icon of the Theotokos Hodogetria, and the Coptic Ninth Hour Agpeya with the Burning Bush Hymn served by Abouna Stephen Smith.

Furthermore we had seven talks on a variety of subjects and of course the sermons. A very rich diet! Notable for me were the talks by Dr Richard Clutterbuck, Research Fellow (Wesley House, Cambridge), who explained the origin and meaning of “Hail Mary full of grace”; HE Metropolitan Kallistos spoke on the Eucharist as Sacrifice; Canon Norman Wallwork gave the Pater Marr Memorial Lecture: *W. E. Orchard and the Centenary of the Order of Divine Service*.

Though it all sounds as if it were intense and heavy, it was in fact very stimulating and enjoyable due to the high quality of the talks and the great variety. On the first afternoon we were greeted by Fr Kevin Smith, the Administrator of the Anglican Shrine who told us of the ‘Ecumenical Covenant’ drawn up and signed by himself and Monsignor John Armitage on 24 September 2018. This most encouraging event needs to be more widely known and so we present a copy of it here.



Desmond Miller

Ecumenical Covenant

The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham

"Our agreed statement concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary as pattern of grace and hope is a powerful reflection of our efforts to seek out what we hold in common and celebrates important aspects of our common heritage. Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ stands before us as an exemplar of faithful obedience, and her "be it to me according to your word" is the grace-filled response each of us is called to make to God, both personally and communally, as the Church, the body of Christ. It is as figure of the Church, her arms uplifted in prayer and praise, her hands open in receptivity and availability to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that we are one with Mary as she magnifies the Lord. "Surely," Mary declares in her song recorded in the Gospel of Luke, "from this day all generations will call me blessed."

*from The Preface to MARY: Grace and Hope in Christ,
The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission Agreed Statement.*

The joint statement on the Blessed Virgin Mary by ARCIC reflects the experience of the Anglican and Roman Catholic places of pilgrimage in Walsingham. In our devotion to the Mother of God we jointly recognise and celebrate the message of Our Lady to Richeldis when she asked her to build a replica of the Holy House of Nazareth, in honour of the "joy of my salutation". The joys of Mary, which have long been celebrated in England, are the joys she experienced in her life through her son and redeemer Jesus Christ. We wish to share in that joy, which is the foundation of our faith, by our common witness and worship in Walsingham, as together with Mary we praise and magnify God's holy name (Luke 1: 46).

To this end we declare:

- As God's pilgrim people, journeying together to share with Mary and all the saints in the joy of his eternal Kingdom of which this holy place is a sign, we commit ourselves to praying for that unity which is Christ's will for his Church (John 17: 21).
- Recognising that we share custodianship of the 'Holy Land of Walsingham', and alongside our brothers and sisters in the Orthodox Church and in the Methodist tradition, we will ensure our Shrine sites are places of reciprocal welcome and hospitality for pilgrims from all traditions.
- Conscious of our common witness to the unique vocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary we will look for ways we can collaborate in joint teaching initiatives in our churches and to our nation on her place in the economy of salvation.
- We shall on certain agreed feasts share together in prayer and proces-

sion. In particular on the Solemnity of the Assumption we shall celebrate with a solemn procession and preaching at St Mary's, the Church of the Annunciation and the Anglican Shrine.

- The Rector and the Priest Administrator will work to support one another, welcoming the presence of one another as honoured guests at each Shrine.
- The staff of both Shrines will, under the direction of the Rector and Priest Administrator, work together where appropriate to share information, resources and skills. We will look for ways in which we can establish joint ventures to enhance the life and ministry of the Shrine.
- The Rector and the Priest Administrator will, as members of the European Network of National Marian Shrines, work as partners with other national Shrines of the Blessed Virgin Mary across Europe.
- Walsingham witnesses to God, to his initiative in creation and to his act of re-creation in Christ. Both Shrines recognise the call to take up commitment to creation, to care for the environment and to promote new initiatives to encourage sustainability.

The Reverend Kevin Smith
Priest Administrator
Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham

Monsignor John Armitage
Rector
Basilica of Our Lady of Walsingham

Signed on the Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham, 24 September 2018

An Ecumenical Marian Pilgrimage to Walsingham

The editors of *Together In Christ* kindly let me have a pre-publication copy of Desmond Miller's article, as they knew my wife Morwenna and I had also been on this pilgrimage (although, as is the way of these things, Desmond and I didn't actually meet!) and that I had made some notes of my own about my purely personal impressions. They suggested I should add them as a supplement to Desmond's account.

I wholly agree with Desmond that the pilgrimage was efficiently and imaginatively organised. This was, I think, largely down to Fr Mark Woodruff, the secretary of the Ecumenical Marian Pilgrimage Trust, who is an old friend of our diocesan Commission for Christian Unity.

The rooms in the block in the Anglican Shrine where Morwenna and I were accommodated were named after the various orders of angels. We felt quite unworthy to have Thrones and Dominations allocated to us! Princedoms and Powers were next door and the Archangels on the floor below. (Not sure who was in the basement.)

I found the Methodist service of Holy Communion very interesting. It was done in a style which reflected the 'sacramental' movement in



Methodism and, we gathered, is probably not typical of Methodist celebrations in general. The celebrant wore an alb and a stole, and the liturgy was very similar to that of the modern Church of England. I was interested to note that the celebrant stood at the ‘north end’ of the altar (that is, the left hand side as seen from the congregation); this is enjoined in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, although it was the first time I myself have actually seen that particular rubric followed. (Perhaps I’ve never been to the right kind of Anglican church!)

The Orthodox Liturgy of the Presanctified was very beautiful, with some fine chanting. But the church was small and very crowded, there were very few seats and the incense smoke was plentiful and powerful, factors which in my case made the service a bit of an ordeal! I think I got more out of the Akathist Hymn before the icon of the Theotokos Hodegetria (‘the Mother of God who shows the way’) which depicts Our Lady pointing to the child Jesus on her lap. It was served in the Anglican Shrine Church by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, the distinguished British Orthodox theologian, again with some beautiful chanting in which we eventually felt confident enough to join. ‘Akathist’ means ‘not sitting down’, but I’m afraid I and others did in fact take advantage of the seats, on the grounds of age and infirmity – Orthodox services are very long! At the end we were all invited to kiss the icon and be blessed by the Metropolitan, which I felt very privileged to be able to do.

I noticed that the Orthodox do not banish ‘Alleluia’ in Lent, as we in the West do. Indeed, as I later discovered, they use it more in Lent than at other times. Fr Mark later told me that this probably in fact was something of a historical accident rather than a deliberate decision by either church. Wikipaedia tells us nevertheless that singing ‘Alleluia’ in Lent ‘is in accordance with the Orthodox approach to fasting, which is one of sober joy.’ I like that idea.

I was very impressed by Metropolitan Kallistos’ talk about the Eucharist as a sacrifice. This sacrifice, he said, was identical with that of Christ himself, offered, according to Orthodox doctrine, to the Holy Trinity as a whole, not just to the Father. One way of thinking about this, as proposed by an Orthodox theologian in the twelfth century, was that in the Eucharist we participate in Christ’s perpetual offering of himself at the heavenly altar. (In discussion with Metropolitan Kallistos afterwards I mentioned that this also seems to be reflected in the Roman Canon – ‘command that these gifts be borne by the hands of your holy Angel to your altar on high....’)

William Edwin Orchard (1877-1955), the subject of Canon Norman Wallwork's lecture, was a fascinating character. He was a Presbyterian, later Congregationalist, minister who introduced sacramental worship of a Catholic kind (daily Eucharist and Offices, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament) into the Congregational chapel at King's Weigh House in Mayfair. Eventually he became a Roman Catholic priest. The King's Weigh House building is now the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral, where Fr Mark Woodruff serves as a priest and which we in the Christian Unity Commission have visited.

Two other presentations, a talk and a Scriptural reflection, which I personally found very helpful were by Frances Young, a Methodist minister and a very distinguished theologian. The central notion of her talk was that of the whole of humanity as a collectivity or organism. What happened to Adam and Eve happened to us. Thus Mary, as the new Eve and mother of the Church, plays an essential role in restoring, through Christ, the damaged image of God in humanity as a whole.

Her Scriptural reflection was based on Romans 8: 21-23 – the whole creation, and we ourselves, groaning in labour pains as we wait for freedom from bondage. She referred to other Scriptural passages where childbirth is presented as a metaphor for judgment, often followed by a new creation - anguish followed by joy - and suggested that this can be interpreted as casting light on Mary's role in the redemption of the universe.

I would also like to mention a very fine organ recital of music on Marian themes given in the Anglican parish church by two young and clearly multi-talented Methodist ministers.

I agree that the Ecumenical Covenant between the two Walsingham Shrines is very encouraging. It might also be worth mentioning that at the Roman Catholic Shrine, which is now the (Minor) Basilica of Our Lady of Walsingham, there were displays about the preliminary plans (not yet approved) for the construction of a much bigger Shrine Church; the present Chapel of Reconciliation, a very attractive building in the style of a traditional Norfolk wooden barn, has been found to be too small, and the intention is to demolish it. I, and I suspect many others, will be sorry to see it go (if in the end it does.)

The pilgrimage was a memorable experience for Morwenna and me, and I felt my understanding of Mary's role as Mother of the Church was enhanced and deepened. The ecumenical aspect was particularly encouraging, although I did wonder what some of our evangelical Protestant brothers and sisters would have made of it.

Robin Orton

A long association with the Commission



Barbara stepped down from her position of vice-chair of the CUC in March. She has contributed a great deal to the Commission over her many years of involvement. Many readers will remember her as chair of the SW area until the meetings sadly folded.

My involvement with Christian Unity began after John Paul II visited the UK in 1982. For me his message was threefold - Peace, Prayer and Christian Unity. I decided to combine all three and started prayers for peace in Kew. We began by meeting to pray for peace each week in a different church and then after about four months it continued monthly. At that time many of the Catholics who came said they had never been in a non-Catholic church before and it was a new experience to pray with other Christians as well as being in the different churches. I produced a prayer leaflet each month so that people could continue to pray on their own in the weeks between the meetings. Churches Together in Kew evolved from the Prayers for Peace.

My parents were Lutherans and I attended the Congregational church. I was very involved in my church, taught at Sunday school and was a member of Girl Crusaders. I am very grateful for this. When I entered the Catholic Church I brought with me treasures which have been very important to me as a Catholic, particularly a love and knowledge of Scripture, a prayer life that is spontaneous and informal and intimate, and my experience in teaching children about the Bible.

For many years I was involved in Churches Together in Kew. I have written a number of Lent study books for the Lent groups we held each year as well as being on the planning group. My involvement with the Unity Commission began in 1997 when I was approached by Alfred Kenyan, who was part of the South West Area, I suspect one of the original members. He asked me to be the parish unity contact for Kew. I have been involved since then, first as parish unity contact, then as secretary and then as chair.

I feel very privileged to have been part of the Commission. It has enabled me to meet many wonderful people and attend stimulating and encouraging events and conferences. I continue to carry a passion for unity in my heart and am waiting to see what the Lord might have in store for me in the future to continue this work in a new way.

Barbara Wood

Russian Orthodox Cathedral Visit

On Thursday 23 May there was the next in the series of Christian Unity Commission visits to places of worship of other denominations, this time to the Russian Orthodox Cathedral Abroad in Chiswick. It required some research to work out my journey from Welling, requiring three trains, but it was well worth the effort. The majority of the 22 visitors who gathered outside the impressive building in glorious sunshine had come from nearby Kew, encouraged by Barbara Wood who had suggested the visit.



We were greeted by the sub-deacon Nicolas Mabin who began by showing us some interesting features of the cathedral such as the fact that it was designed so that worshippers could walk all around the outside. It's a very impressive building, topped by a beautiful blue onion-shaped dome, reminding me of the magnificent churches I saw in St Petersburg three years ago. I expected Nicolas to have some Russian heritage, but it turned out that he is an English convert who was originally an Anglican. Apparently he became Orthodox as a young man after having attended, whilst on pilgrimage to Walsingham, the Orthodox liturgy in the Russian chapel there (the old railway station) - he immediately recognised that this was for him.

Nicolas was accompanied by one of the four archpriests, Fr Yaroslav Gudymenko. As we walked into the cathedral, most of us gasped at the sheer beauty of the décor, the walls covered with icons. It had been freshly decorated in 2014. But one feature most of us didn't like so much was the lack of anywhere to sit, apart from a few short benches along the walls for those who really needed them. The congregation is expected to stand throughout the services (which can last up to three hours!) so attenders do have to be somewhat committed. Men stand on one side and women on the other, though in practice this is not rigidly adhered to, particularly since (typically) there is a preponderance of women. Children are usually baptised when they are babies and can start receiving Communion after that. Once they have reached the age of reason (at 7 or 8 years) they, along with the adults, should attend confession before receiving, and this is incorporated into the Sunday services with long queues forming.

Nicolas spoke of the beauty of their worship, preparing us for the next life. It is for this reason that all who can should stand and give glory to God. In practice Nicolas did admit that some people come and go during the 3-hour service, slipping out for comfort breaks. The Russian Orthodox liturgical calendar is so rich in complexity that it only repeats every 500 years or so!

Having digested the magnificence of the cathedral, Nicolas surprised us by leading us to a smaller church built underneath the main one when the size of the congregation was dwindling some years ago. This was also beautifully decorated, including

icons of the Royal Martyrs (Tsar Nicholas II and his family). In recent years the congregation has increased again, with between 120 and 200 attending on Sundays (much increased on Great Feasts) so the crypt church is just used during the week. Most of the congregation are originally from countries of the old Soviet Union. The liturgy is celebrated in Old Slavonic, as in Russia, with sermons being translated into English.

One feature which took me back to my childhood was that only men and boys are allowed on the altar or sanctuary area. The Holy Table was behind three doors in the iconostasis (screen of icons); only bishops, priests and deacons can pass through these doors and, even then, only on prescribed occasions.

In answer to a question about the main differences between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic faiths, Nicolas promptly told us of the main three stumbling blocks to unity for them:



1. The infallibility of the Pope;
2. The addition to the Nicene Creed of the words “who proceeds from the Father *and the Son* (the Filioque clause) in the 11th century;
3. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady (formally defined in 1854).

Unfortunately, we were not allowed to pray together with our hosts for Christian unity. This was because, to quote an email Nicolas sent to Robin Orton (CUC Chair): “the only services of communal prayer performed in our communities (including this one) are the ancient rites of the Orthodox Church... Obviously, you and the group are welcome to pray in your hearts for healing of the divisions, and you may be present and pray during any of the Cathedral's Divine Services, but additional rites/communal prayers are not a part of our tradition.”

However, our hosts did make up for this by being extremely warm in their welcome. After a very well organised tour, we were taken into the hall next door where a large table was laid out with a magnificent display of sandwiches and little cakes, and we did say grace together before partaking. An extremely friendly Russian lady kept drawing up chairs for anyone she thought was in need, and she ensured we all had a postcard of the cathedral as a souvenir of our very memorable visit.

Thank you to Robin for organising this event (and for sharing his reflections with me, which came in useful for producing this article). I hope this can be followed up by a visit to our local Greek Orthodox church in the not too distant future.

Gwen Chiosso

Receptive Ecumenism (Part 1)

This is the first part of the talk which Bishop Paul gave at the Study Day on 6 April held at Crossway URC. This was followed by an interview with a Street Pastor, David Burke, showing Receptive Ecumenism in action, also reproduced here.



I hope you'll bear with me, if I begin with a historical introduction. Receptive Ecumenism is in some ways a response to the particular situation we have been in, ecumenically, for the past ten or fifteen years. In a sense, in order to understand it, we need to understand the problem to which it hopes to offer a solution – or, at least, a way forward.

A Brief History: expectations disappointed

If you ask people where Christian unity is going these days, you'll get a variety of answers. Some would point to the hopes and expectations of fifty years ago, when it was thought that many churches would come together in a relatively short time. So far, the only move in that direction, where two or more churches have come together to form a single organisation – is represented by the church in which we're meeting, the United Reformed Church. This was formed by the coming together of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches in the 1970s, with a couple of additions later on. Later efforts to bring together the Church of England and the Methodist Church came frustratingly close to success and have received fresh impetus in recent years – but this has been a long process, leading to a general feeling that ecumenism is running out of steam, so to speak.

As a result, a certain degree of disillusionment has crept in, over the past twenty years or so, expressed for instance by people sometimes speaking of an 'ecumenical winter'. This has become more problematic, too, because issues have arisen that further divide the churches – first, women's ordination and then, human sexuality and gender. It's clear that the churches will continue to struggle with these issues, which not only divide churches from each other, but also cause division within denominations.

Unity in terms of Communion

On a more positive note, over the same period, there has been a gradual change in how Christian unity is conceived. It is now seen more in terms of communion between churches rather than some sort of merger or amalgamation between churches. I suspect that this has been partly due to a greater ecumenical engagement by Catholics and Orthodox, who look back to the period before the 'Great Schism' between eastern and western Christianity in 1054. Prior to that, although the two traditions had been gradually drifting further apart, the churches of Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria remained in full Communion with each other – while retaining their own styles of liturgy, spirituality, governance and discipline.

If this model could be applied to present-day churches, each would retain its individuality in these areas – just as the Eastern Catholic Churches and the Ordinar-

iate of Our Lady of Walsingham already do. Even if (and it's a big 'if') a significant number of Christian denominations could be sufficiently reconciled in terms of doctrine to come into full Communion, there would be a much greater range of legitimate diversity than there currently is within the churches in Communion with Rome. At the same time, it's worth noting that there is more variety than many people think, even within the Roman Catholic tradition – in terms of styles of worship, spirituality, liturgy and various other aspects of Christian life. I sometimes wonder whether, if Wesley had been a Catholic, he might have been able to accommodate his renewal movement by founding a new religious order or lay association, without needing to form a separate church.

In this scenario, a degree of diversity would be regarded as a good thing, with each church bringing its own characteristic strengths and cherished traditions. Admittedly, we all have different ideas about what degree of diversity is compatible with being in full Communion – and in what areas. Catholicism is particularly sensitive on doctrine, for other traditions there would be other priorities such as personal morality, political/social issues, Biblical interpretation and so on. These are things that ecumenical dialogue will need to explore over the coming years.

Theological Dialogue vs. Practical Action

Meanwhile, the work of the ecumenical dialogues has continued, operating mainly on a theological level. In the English-speaking world, the best known of these is probably ARCIC, in dialogue with the world-wide Anglican Communion. But there are many others in which Catholics are involved – such as dialogues with the Orthodox, Methodists, Lutherans, Pentecostals and the United Reformed Church – and these operate both at the national and international levels. There are also, of course, similar dialogues between many of these other churches.

These theological dialogues have made considerable progress. Best-known is probably the Joint Declaration on Justification, made by the Catholic and Lutheran churches in 1999. I'll come back to this later, but I'll just mention two ways in which it is very important. First, it resolved the issue that was at the heart of the Protestant Reformation. Second, it pointed the way forward by introducing a crucial new methodology that has been adopted by other dialogues since, including ARCIC. Despite these advances, I think it would be true to say that this progress remains a 'well-kept secret'. Many people just take it for granted that theological dialogue isn't going anywhere – perhaps because new areas of difference seem to be appearing more quickly than the old ones are being resolved!

Because of this, ecumenism is increasingly seen in terms of Christians working together, in activities such as Street Pastors and food banks, as well as coming together for common witness on various social and moral issues. These are certainly important – partly because it emphasises how much we can already do together, and partly because in this way we come to know each other better and can learn from one another.

All the same, this still leaves us with a certain scepticism about the possibility of Christian unity – partly because most people still think of it in terms of the merging of structures and organisations.

What is needed in order to move forward?

In this context, we need a way forward that accepts the individuality of the churches,

with their structures and disciplines. In other words, it sees at least a degree of diversity as a good thing. It should rejoice in the distinctive character of each church, in terms of liturgy, spirituality and social outreach. I would also suggest that Catholics (in particular) would need to accept a degree of diversity in terms of doctrine. This might sound shocking, but in fact the creeds and the doctrinal definitions of the Church only mark out the boundaries of orthodox teaching. Within that, there is more room for different schools of thought, than many Catholics realise.

At the same time, we need an approach that points a way towards greater unity, seen in terms of a journey towards full Communion, recognising that ecumenism is about more than just working and praying together – important though these things certainly are.

Enter Receptive Ecumenism...

In some ways, Receptive Ecumenism is just a fancy title for something that has been going on for a long time. The basic idea is very simple, that each church or denomination can fruitfully learn from the insights and traditions of the others.

This is different to traditional dialogue, where representatives of two (or more) churches come together in order to seek some measure of agreement in terms of doctrine. For this sort of dialogue, obviously, the churches concerned have to cooperate. Receptive Ecumenism is about what I can learn from other Christian traditions, whether or not they are interested in what I might have to offer. This is important, because Receptive Ecumenism is sometimes presented the wrong way round, so to speak. It isn't about me or my church inviting others to learn from us. It's about what I can recognise as good and valuable in other traditions.

It's true that, if all the churches are open to 'receive' from each other in this way, this will naturally bring them closer together — but it's important to realise that this is what you might call a side-effect. It's a very desirable side-effect, but it isn't in itself what Receptive Ecumenism is all about. In other words, it is worthwhile for me, as a Catholic, to be open to learn from other churches and traditions, even though this will probably only bring the churches closer together if many or most of the other churches do likewise.

One drawback of traditional ecumenism is that the benefits are seen in terms of eventual unity, which is (at best) far off. Meanwhile, in order to make progress towards this goal, churches feel that they are being asked to make certain sacrifices, in terms of time and effort, here and now. With Receptive Ecumenism, on the other hand, we see a benefit straight away, because our own tradition is enriched. To put it very simply, traditional ecumenism is sometimes seen as 'pain now, for the sake of a future (possibly doubtful) gain'. Receptive Ecumenism is more like 'no pain (because we're not losing anything) and a gain here and now'.

I've presented Receptive Ecumenism as a possible solution to a problem that arises with what I've called traditional ecumenism. At the same time, I'd like to emphasise that Receptive Ecumenism isn't just a sort of second-best, which we only turn to for lack of an alternative. I hope that by the end of this talk you'll see that Receptive Ecumenism is always going to be essential, if the search for unity between the churches is going to move from an activity only for theologians and academics, to become something that ordinary Christians can understand and take to heart.

A positive attitude to doctrine: Learning more, not ‘letting go’

Receptive Ecumenism can also remind us that theological doctrine does have a positive role. All too often, doctrine tends to be seen as something negative: that which divides. Perhaps this lies behind a certain impatience with the theological dialogues between churches. It all seems rather remote and abstract. Wouldn't it all be much easier if we just concentrated on social action or mission? It would be easier, but if we just focused on social action, putting doctrine on one side, we'd be in danger of losing sight of the purpose and motivation for that action. And if we focus purely on mission without reference to doctrine, what remains of the message we're trying to communicate?

To be continued.

Bishop Paul Hendricks

Working as a Street Pastor in Banbury

David Burke was interviewed by Alessia Cesana.



When people hear the word “pastor” they often assume it’s a very Protestant space. Did you have any concerns? How did you get involved in the first place?

I did not have any concerns because I know of many activities that happen involving the different churches: Churches Together, Lent groups, Fair Trade, Food banks, Good Friday procession with the cross, Christian teachers doing supply in Catholic primary schools. I have been involved in working with Christians from other churches for a long time. I guess people do identify pastor as protestant but I feel I am very much part of a Christian team whose work is to serve the people of our town, so it has never bothered me.

I have always thought life is more interesting if you say *yes*. and the person I have most often said *yes* to is my wife. So when she was asked if she wanted to be a street pastor, by a Christian colleague, she said *no but David will*— it was my cue to say *yes*. So I went out as an observer for a night patrol.

On my first night as an observer I was impressed by two things:

1. Broken glass on the floor, so shall we clear it up .. what with? Well David, in the rucksack you are carrying there is a dustpan and brush.
2. Later in the morning some ladies were walking in bare feet—not a good idea .. so shall we give them something safer to wear? So in the rucksack there are some pairs of flip flops. We do not preach we just help where we can and when people are happy for the help.

This practical and team help on the streets of Banbury was something I did want to be part of, but it goes further than just the Saturday night. When I tell people at work that I go to church there is not much of a response. But when they hear that I patrol

with the street pastors they ask me about it and when we meet up they ask how the street pastoring is going. It is as if the world has been waiting for this witness: Christians of "whatever flavour " are being Christian together. In Banbury at least 13 churches are represented .. I did not know there were that many churches in Banbury. So this means that in all those churches people know the street pastor—our patrols are a link between the churches.

Lay Catholics are often reticent to become involved in work that involves sharing our faith with others, especially people who may not be too positive about Catholicism. Have you ever found any difficulties with the other street pastors for being a Catholic?

When I was interviewed before I started the training to join the street pastors they were pleased to have a Catholic joining the team and had prayed for one to join them! I asked them to get to know me just as David since the churches we go to are only part of who we are.

My team leader was concerned that I might feel isolated as not many Catholics work as street pastors, but I assured him that I felt included and certainly not isolated. I wanted to share how and what we do and what it means for my faith. When we are out together we don't talk theology; we pray beforehand that we can be what each person needs and then we talk about whether to give that person flip flops or get them some water—never preaching ...It's a matter of being prepared to be fed by people you don't know and feeding them: it's a great exchange.

One of my first experiences of people from other churches was when I was a young person and was invited to a bible study in a Baptist church and they told a joke of someone arriving in heaven and approaching a brick wall and a person putting their finger to their mouth saying: "Shush, the Catholics are behind there and they think they are the only ones." It was funny but sad and made me think.

Did you learn anything from the other street pastors, or the experience in general, that has influenced positively your own faith? What about things that the Church as a whole can learn from?

Sometimes I think the children's game "Hide-and-Seek" helps us understand the very nature of God. When I play hide-and-seek I hide in one place and that is where I can be found. When God plays hide-and-seek, so to speak, maybe he hides in many places because he wants to be found. If someone has found him in a different place to me then maybe we all get to know him a bit better. So we have got to know each other as people first, the churches we go to is only part of who we are. Does this mean: I didn't want other people's attitudes to my Church (which may be negative and misinformed) to be a block in their relationship with me?

As street pastors we meet everyone, people who are homeless, who are drunk, door men, the police and each other. We are sharing our faith in action rather than through discussion or theories. This has an effect on the people we meet. We share a faith and have a common baptism so we work together aware of the fact that "where two or more are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matt 18:20). The streets belong to us too if we choose to go there and some people want to have a conversation at 3am... We can only be part of that conversation if we are there. As St Francis said: "preach the gospel at all times

and if necessary, use words.”

I have been so impressed and moved by the strength of the faith of others. One couple whose business was failing were advised to become bankrupt but they wouldn't as it would mean their creditors would not get any money. They were prepared to lose everything, their house and to trust in God, sure that if they did the right thing all would be well eventually.

The police said: "You are making the church relevant and actually what you do only the church could get away with." The police had allocated us a patch within the town to work in, but having seen via the CCTV how we work and the effect we were having, told us to feel free to go anywhere in the town where we feel there is a need. Apparently they said the crime rate has gone down 18% as a result of what we do.

Did you ever feel like you needed to hide your Catholic identity, or were people open to it, perhaps even curious about it?

All the street pastors know I am a Catholic. And on the street we say we are from all the churches, and sometimes the reply is 'even the Catholics?' and they can say yes. People we meet are not necessarily in a space to talk about their faith. I was only asked once about the Eucharist... do all Catholics believe the bread becomes the real body of Christ or is it a range of individual understanding? The question was asked because another pastor had shared a healing experience he had had after a sharing of bread with other Christians .. he quoted Christ saying "Do you want to leave me too?"

I said, "No, it is the teaching of the Catholic church and the love that allows itself to be consumed by the other .. the stronger allows the weaker to consume it .. so making the weaker strong" - that was all. We talk about going to church on Sunday; something we all have to juggle with is sleep. We meet people on the streets who say they are Catholics.

People on the streets often ask us why we do it and we need to be prepared to answer. Last weekend someone asked me and I said, "We do it because we believe in the power of love," and they said, "So do I, but do you think you make a difference?" I said, "I am here and talking to you— that makes a difference and you can only make a difference if you are there!"

I am aware of our Christian history, how much other Christians brought God to people in the midst of great social change as in the industrial revolution; of the times Catholics were unable to share with other Christians, but now we can, and it is a gift.

Do you believe the ecumenical exchange of working within a non-Catholic team has fostered a more positive view of your faith in the other street pastors? What about your view of their faith tradition, has it changed?

Yes, meeting with other Christians cannot but have an effect. For example, we have prayer pastors who pray as we patrol. After the referendum I went to pray for the patrol as there may have been some reaction on the streets. That night the Salvation Army were beginning a 24:7 week prayer session, so I joined them for the night. There is more going on in our town than I previously knew about. I have got to know individuals who are choosing to follow the will of God, as I am, and are trying to discover what that means in practice. For me, Pope Francis is

leading the way, reminding us of the option for the poor...going out to people on the peripheries.

Being a street pastor has let me see another side of my town, the night time, the streets, but the streets belong to us all. We belong on the street too. .. we can think of our churches as having an open door .. anyone is welcome to come in ... but the open door also means that we can go out, and don't be surprised to find that Jesus has got there first. With my fellow Christians I try to recognise the face of Christ in everyone I meet: "Whatever you do to the least of these my brethren, you do it to me."

I have lived in Banbury for over 28 years and I have been down to town many, many times but no one has said that what I do is special .. but every night I patrol with the street pastors at least one person says to us that we are amazing, the work we do is special. And all the churches are part of it. "By this shall everyone know that you are my disciples... by the love that you have for one another."

Preparing these answers made me think you can only get a surprise if you are ready to open something when you don't know what it is, and my experience is that God is love and he makes you smile at the surprises he prepares.

David Burke

Taizé Prayer Meetings



As part of the Commission's work with young adults, we collaborated with the Christian Unity coordinator at the diocese of Arundel and Brighton to organise a Lenten prayer evening with one of the Brothers from Taizé (in Burgundy, France) as guest. This was a taster event with the potential to develop into an ecumenical pilgrimage to stay with the community for a week.

Taizé, and its community's way of prayer, has been loved by many Christians, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, for many years, especially those with a heart for Christian Unity. Its rhythm of silence, simple chanting and meditation reaches beyond the confines of each denomination, learning from all different traditions but not owing anything to any of them. From the 7 brothers that joined just after the war, when Brother Roger was able to return to Taizé after he had to escape to Geneva when his activities welcoming refugees were found out, there are now over 100 brothers of the community, many of whom live away from it, fostering community somewhere else. As a writer, I feel uneasy about using the word community so many times in a row, but it is impossible not to when it comes to Taizé: its very essence is that sharing this life of prayer, in which kindness and simplicity are at the centre, is "a sign that God is love and love alone". Furthermore, the brothers of Taizé are

a living embodiment of the reconciliation of a divided church.

Popular among young adults, with thousands of young people going to stay throughout the year and the programme of prayer catering specifically for them, the model of Taizé can be a model to emulate for anyone passionate about involving young adults in working for Christian Unity.

Successive pontiffs have stressed the importance of ecumenism in their writings, as well as unity being one of the key concerns of the Second Vatican Council. However, it was not as novel as many claim. In 1928 Pope Pius XI wrote that: “Never perhaps in the past have we seen, as we see in these our own times, the minds of men so occupied by the desire both of strengthening and of extending to the common welfare of human society that fraternal relationship which binds and unites us together, and which is a consequence of our common origin and nature (...) A similar object is aimed at by some, in those matters which concern the New Law promulgated by Christ our Lord” (*Mortalium Animos*), and encouraged all Christians to be “as one” against the growing concern of “irreligiosity”.

Recent research on church affiliation presents a grim picture of lowering numbers of people in the pews, especially among young adults, so His Holiness’ words are as relevant as ever. Taizé’s prayer tradition, which includes contemplation and Scripture readings, allows for the creation of non-denominational prayer groups which will be “as one”, not just by praying for Christian Unity during the dedicated prayer week or by working together in charitable endeavours, but by living out this unity through finding, in a way, the minimum common denominator. In an age where a growing number of young adults declare themselves spiritual but not religious, and meditation of various kinds is practised across the board, the meditative chanting of Taizé can even become an opening for evangelisation and engaging people who are seeking God but have reasons not to look for Him in more traditional expressions of the Church.

The meeting, which took place in a Catholic parish in Banstead, was one of many evenings that Brother Jean Patrick attended in the UK in early 2019, and not the first UK tour from brothers of the community. The venues hosting them varied from Catholic churches to Anglican parishes high, mid and low, and evangelical plants like Balham Vineyard Church last year; a group has even been staying with the Bruderhof in West Sussex, experiencing life in another Christian community. The variety of churches eager to host Taizé prayer meetings so many years after the community was first founded is a testament to the power of this approach, which makes room for the Holy Spirit to lead our expectant hearts beyond the confines of our past experiences of what it means to be Christians.

Alessia Cesana

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