

**Mary, Martha and Lazarus (29 July)**

God our Father,  
whose Son enjoyed the love of his friends,  
Mary, Martha and Lazarus,  
in learning, argument and hospitality:  
may we so rejoice in your love  
that the world may come to know  
the depths of your wisdom, the wonder of your compassion,  
and your power to bring life out of death;  
through the merits of Jesus Christ,  
our friend and brother,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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**Watchword for August 2015 (from the Herrnhuter *Losungen*)**

"Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

Matthew 10:16b

The biblical "Watchwords" of the Herrnhut Brethren (Moravian Church)  
have been published every year since 1731.

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**Gospel Imprint: "Making a retreat"**

"On a Retreat you step back from the busyness of life, not in order to get away but to move towards God. The idea of giving time to allow ourselves to be restored in this way is not a new one. Jesus himself often did it (see e.g. Luke 6: 12, 9: 18) and he clearly expected his disciples to do the same. ...The purpose wasn't to escape from busyness, even though that would no doubt have been very welcome. The purpose was to withdraw from the things that prevented them from focusing their attention on him."

You can find the rest of the leaflet at:

<http://www.gospelimprint.com/GI-documents/Retreat-Nov10.pdf>.

Please print it out and make it widely available! Try putting a selection of these leaflets at the back of your church.

*Gospel Imprint is the fresh voice in Anglicanism sharing free resources with all Christians who are seeking to learn, worship and witness to the generosity of the Kingdom of God. It is supported by Affirming Catholicism and the Society of Catholic Priests.*

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## **General Synod elections this summer**

Might God be calling you to stand for General Synod?

The General Synod is the leading legislative and decision-making body for the Church of England. It is made up of bishops, clergy and laity from across the Church who come together to discuss and vote on important matters. Members are elected for five years.

Questions which are likely to be discussed in the next five-year period include: human sexuality and same-sex marriage; multi-faith Britain; poverty and wealth; young people and schools; mission; environment and climate change; leadership in the Church of England; the needs and contribution of older people; just war; the criminal justice system; medical ethics.

These are all areas in which the Affirming Catholic voice needs to be heard.

If you are 18 or over, a communicant member of the Church of England, and on the electoral roll of the church you attend regularly, then you are eligible to stand. A useful resource pack for potential candidates can be found here:

<http://www.inclusive-church.com/sites/default/files/files/General%20Synod%20Elections%202015%20-%20Candidates%20Pack.pdf>.

Nomination papers are now available from your Diocesan Office.

Nominations must be put forward by 4 September. Voting will take place in September and October. For elections to the House of Laity, electors are the lay Deanery Synod representatives.

Is God calling you to stand for General Synod?

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## **Reflections on General Synod, York 2015 – and the past quinquennium**

The proroguing of the quinquennium in York, July 2015, ended my first and hopefully not last stint on General Synod. Some people felt the order of business was more of a mopping up exercise and lighter than in previous sessions. However, there were excellent debates of significance, such as on the FOAC report on senior leadership, the World Council of Churches report on working towards a common vision and the approval of the Safeguarding and clergy discipline measures, and of course the final day's focus on climate change. But important as these are, three other debates or symbolic moments stood out for me this Synod. Being a proctor of General Synod has been a stretching experience for me due to my involvement in two key committees, the Liturgical Commission and the Women in the Episcopate Committee. York 2015 brought the formal acceptance of the alternative words for the Rite of Baptism, which has been worked on by the Liturgical Commission. Quite honestly, I was not too keen on the decision to make these changes when the motion from Liverpool was first introduced into Synod, but through debate in the Commission and seeing the sensitivity with which these alternative words were crafted, I became a convert to their worth. However, I still think that even these texts will need those responsible for preparing families for the baptism of a baby to actually do just that, and help our rapidly secularising society to (re)learn and understand more deeply the language and tenets of the Christian faith.

My joy was unadulterated by any previous doubt by the presence of Bishops Michael Perham (former president of Affirming Catholicism) and Rachel Treweek at Synod. It was fantastic to share with Synod the rapturous applause at the Archbishop's welcome to Bishop Rachel as she took her place as a Bishop, and also to share in his farewell to Bishop Michael. I worked with Michael and many others in the Trinity House Group, as we tried to find a way back after the "No" vote in November 2012. While Bishop Michael was not on the Women in the Episcopate Committee, he, along with the Bishop of Dover, worked tirelessly to bring solutions to the table, including the proposal for eight women to participate in the meetings of the House of Bishops. Rachel Treweek was another member of that group. The Watch Fringe Lunch gave us all the opportunity to see Bishop Michael informally hand over to Bishop Rachel the mantle of Bishop of Gloucester, with a hug and kiss.

I deliberately chose not to sit on the Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns Committee when I joined Synod so as not to be pigeon-holed by skin colour or ethnicity. However, as one of the very few Black and Minority Ethnic members of Synod (and numbers have decreased over the life of the Synod), it is clear that the commitment to widen the ethnic diversity of Synod and increase the numbers of BAME clergy in senior positions in the CofE has not had the same level of intentionality as the gender agenda, nor has it been blessed with the campaigning vigour of a pressure group such as Watch. The Bishop of Chelmsford spoke forthrightly on behalf of CMEAC about this being part of the unfinished business of the CofE, despite the very many reports commissioned to explore the issue. He called for intentional and positive action from the leadership of the church, at every level, to bring real and lasting change – for action, not more words! It was a real fillip to have a bishop lead on that message, and to recognise the way in which "unconscious bias" or institutional racism keeps out diversity and difference. This business is most certainly not finished. I hope that during this Synod election you will look out for and encourage more people from a diversity of backgrounds to put themselves forward for Synod, and that we see that reflected in the new General Synod in November later this year.

Now that would bring real satisfaction and deep joy.

Rosemarie Mallett (Chair of Affirming Catholicism)

See above for how to stand and a link to the Inclusive Church GS Election materials, which have been supported by AffCath.

The AffCath Briefing Paper for the 2015 Synod can be found here

<http://www.affirmingcatholicism.org.uk/userFiles/File/Aff%20Cath%20Briefing%20Paper%20July%202015%20-%20final.pdf> .

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### **Donations and gift aid**

We welcome donations to support the work of Affirming Catholicism. You can send a cheque to Mark Perrett, Affirming Catholicism Administrator, St Mary's Church Office, Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16 9ES, or make an online donation by registering here:

<http://www.affirmingcatholicism.org.uk/pages/default.asp?sID=0&mode=donation>.

**Have you renewed your gift aid declaration?** Many of our supporters made gift aid declarations under the old rules, and these declarations have now run out. If you have not renewed yours, or are not sure, please complete and return this form:

If you would like to make a donation and have it Gift Aided (Affirming Catholicism can reclaim 25p on every £1 donated increasing the value of your donation by a quarter at no extra cost to you) please complete the following declaration and return it with your donation to Affirming Catholicism:

**Gift Aid declaration** – for past, present and future donations.

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**Please notify Affirming Catholicism if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income/capital gains.**

*If you pay income tax at the higher rate or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.*

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### **Forthcoming events:**

#### **In the Diocese of Peterborough:**

Saturday 10th October Quiet Day from 10:30am  
directed by The Very Revd Frances Ward, Dean of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich  
meeting at St. Mary's Church, Burton Latimer NN15 5LU  
(tea and coffee will be provided; a donation of £2 person is requested)

Saturday 21st November 10:30am  
Revd Dr Stuart Mousir-Harrison (Chaplain of University College, Northampton): "The Interfaith Dimension in a Catholic Understanding"  
University Building, Northampton  
(a donation of £2 person is requested)

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**We hope you enjoy Affirming Catholicism's newsletter.**

Do tell us what you think, and let us know of forthcoming events that you would like publicised by writing to: [newsletters@affirmingcatholicism.org.uk](mailto:newsletters@affirmingcatholicism.org.uk).

If you are a diocesan coordinator, please pass the newsletter on to your members and supporters, or let us have their emails so that we can send it to them directly.

If you have received this because someone has forwarded it to you, please consider becoming a supporter yourself. It's easy to do this on our website [www.affirmingcatholicism.org.uk](http://www.affirmingcatholicism.org.uk). In doing this, you will receive regular news and updates including the Annual Review; your financial contribution will help us to do more and to do it even better; and you will be one more voice calling for a generous and open Catholic future for the Church of England and the Anglican Communion.

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If you would like to know more about what Affirming Catholicism does, look at our **Annual Review** which is available here: <http://www.affirmingcatholicism.org.uk/pages/default.asp?id=15>.