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**Winter
Newsletter
2019**

from the chair

Dear Friends,

Now four years into retirement and enjoying more time at home with my wife and family and time for at least some of those activities I enjoy but previously could never frequently indulge, I have found myself asking about vocation in retirement. I am still a deacon, still a priest, still a bishop. What is it exactly that God is asking of me now in this latter part of my life? Clearly not just more of the same as before.



What have I to offer? With Christmas just around the corner we shall soon be saturated with carols and it is hard not to be a little world weary with all its commercialisation. But each year I am struck by those words in Christina Rossetti's hymn *In the Bleak Midwinter*, "What shall I give him?...what I have I give him, give my heart". So where is my heart? Still in ministry? Yes, but looking for opportunity to be of service and not just taking services, important though this is.

I mentioned in the Spring Letter that the Council of the RCA had recently commissioned a piece of research work on retired clergy from Julian Hubbard, who was Director at Ministry Division before his own recent retirement. We hope shortly to make this widely available but most especially to our bishops and their dioceses to encourage greater use of and opportunity for retired clergy as resources to parishes, ministry teams and deaneries or indeed to dioceses. The accumulated experience from time spent in various posts, be they parochial, chaplaincy, educational is enormous. We have much to offer and willingness to share. The research, which is predominantly statistical, gives information about numbers of retired clergy in each diocese vis à vis those in stipendiary and self-supporting ministry. This is just a beginning and the research raises many questions that need further exploration, but it is the beginning of what I believe is a vital process of reimagining ministry for the retired and our continuing role in the wider ministry of the Church of England to the nation. It would be good to read your views on vocation in retirement if you care to respond and we shall publish them here.

May I wish you a peaceful and joyful Christmas and every blessing in your continuing ministry.

+Ian Brackley

Independent Supported Living for Retired Clergy

Malcolm Liles, our Association Secretary, is making a tour of clergy retirement residences both for his own interest and also for the benefit of our readers. In this issue, we feature Dulverton Hall. Malcolm's article is followed by a reaction from residents of Fosbrooke House, which he visited earlier in the year.

Dulverton Hall

Having written about our experiences at Capel Court and Fosbrooke House in the last newsletter, my wife and I visited the east coast in October and Dulverton Hall in Scarborough for another experience of independent supported living.

Dulverton Hall used to be on another site a little nearer the railway station but set back from wide sea views. The newer Dulverton is set on the seafront esplanade with views of both sea and some delightful public gardens. All of the flats share the sea view and those on the top floor have a commanding view. The doors to the flats are on corridors at the back of the building. The ground floor is non-residential being given over to the community facilities, of laundry, mobility scooter store, chapel, dining-room and kitchen, and community foyer.



There are gardens, and a carpark at the back of the building and on each floor are areas for residents to sit and socialise, or read a book, or pursue a hobby. Wi-fi comes courtesy of one of the residents, and a desktop and printers are available for common use. It's a 15 minute walk along the sea-front into the centre of Scarborough and a profusion of fish and chip shops and sellers of seaside knick-knacks. There are also buses from stops nearby with the opportunity to travel to Filey, or Bridlington.

The sea front gardens have accessible footpaths for wheelchairs and their margins are currently being strengthened to seaward. There is a wide variety of shops nearby and good access to medical facilities. For those unable to use buses there is a local dial a ride scheme.

The flats are mainly designed for one person, with a few for two. Nevertheless some couples have happily occupied flats designed for one, using ingenious storage techniques. Each flat has a small kitchen, hall, lounge, bedroom and shower or wetroom. The kitchen is sufficiently spacious for a cooker, fridge/freezer, washstand and a limited number of units.

Meals can be taken in the dining room. Most people take a two course lunch communally with a range of three or four choices. A few take breakfast together but this is being phased out and is not available to new residents. Supper, usually soup and salads, is available for those who wish it. Many of the residents eat supper prepared in their own flats.

Cleaning of flats, for a fee, will cease in April 2020 and after that residents will either have to do their own cleaning or pay for an agency to carry this out. This would seem to raise a question about how a common standard of cleanliness in the flats will be maintained. One also wonders what other changes might take place during the next few years in order to keep fees at the lowest possible level for the residents. Across all of the Pension Board's schemes independence might be more prominent than support in years to come.

The staff team are very committed to their work, and maintain a good balance between supporting the residents and at the same time encouraging them to live their lives to the full and enjoy local amenities. They are ready to respond when asked to do so.

In the next newsletter we hope to recount our experience of a similar scheme in the USA, and another of the Pension Board schemes here in the UK.

Malcolm Liles

Dear Sir,

When I first read your report of your visit to Fosbrooke House I was so incensed that I thought it best to wait to reply. I am greatly saddened by the misinformation and wrong impressions given by your report. Firstly, this is NOT a HOME! It is a complex of flats where we live independently except for a shared lunch.

Meals

A comment was made about portion sizes, but many people ask for a small portion. Those with healthy appetites are adequately fed. We have a chef who is imaginative and experimental and who works wonders within a tight budget. We have a very varied menu and he always tries to meet the needs of those on a special diet.

Library

We do not have a SMALL library, this is not a public library, but one fit for the needs of the residents and is being upgraded as books are donated and refreshed by the removal of little used books.

Chapel

We have a lovely purpose built chapel which is used daily by residents. I do not understand why special negative mention was made of the raised altar area. My husband who is recovering from a stroke manages perfectly well with care. If people stop celebrating, it is usually for a variety of other health reasons, not the small step.

Garden

We have a large established garden. At the time of your visit, the many yards of lavender hedges would have been coming into bloom and there were poppies everywhere. This summer we have had an influx of butterflies and bees with hundreds of Painted lady butterflies. Why did you not include pictures of our lovely garden instead of the donkeys on the beach! The garden is well used by us for recreation, gardening and exercise. Access is NOT limited if you are wheel chair bound. One such resident spent many hours among the lavender identifying the numerous insects. He gets around the garden unaided!

Laundry

There is no charge for the laundry unless you choose to have it done by staff.

Gym

Why do you expect to have a gym? Have you thought of the dangers of unsupervised use of equipment by the elderly? No mention was made of the many activities which go on here. We have a monthly poetry evening, craft afternoon each Thursday where items are made for sale, cards etc. A games night, study group. A film night, a book club. We also have occasional events like our Curry Club evenings.

In June we had our Fosbrooke Festival Fortnight. During these two weeks we had a hog roast, music morning, morning of shared readings, a fancy hat competition, a prayer morning and much more. The staff pulled out all the stops to make it a special time.

My husband and I moved here nearly 2 years ago and it was the best decision we could have made and we have no regrets.

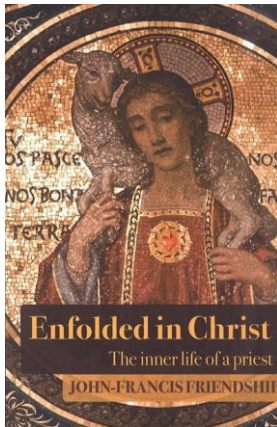
*Yours faithfully,
Rita Crumpton (Mrs.)*



Mrs Crumpton's letter was accompanied by a supporting document signed by 21 of her neighbours at Fosbrooke. Please accept my apologies for the donkey photo, Rita: that was my doing. (It's difficult to find usable photographs of Fosbrooke on the internet.)

Ed

Review: *Enfolded in Christ* by John-Francis Friendship



John-Francis Friendship has written about his experience as a Priest in the Church over many years. The book traces his journey and his own development; but it is more than just an autobiography for here is a reflection, wide ranging in its outlook and scope, covering many aspects of ministry and service which priests will encounter in their daily life. The book is essentially a teaching manual, written partly in an anecdotal style which facilitates entry into some of the more challenging aspects of a priest's experience. John-Francis says that this is a book that he himself would like to have had access to as he set out on his own journey into priesthood.

If this book has taught me anything it is this reminder that we, as priests, are engaged in something essential for our trade, for our flock, for our souls and for the Lord and we need to practice it as of first importance. It teaches the value of Preparation and that this preparation requires time, time so often that we do not seem to have or want to give – and yet, it is the time we have to give if we are to be the people God wants us to be.

John-Francis Friendship teaches us in many ways how to allocate our time and he has given us this treasure better to enable us to worship and live our lives more fruitfully. We may not all agree with his churchmanship; after all we are all gloriously different in Christ, but it has a great deal to say to us and is well presented; and there is an excellent Foreword by Christopher, Bishop of Southwark.

Among other things the book covers Prayer, Confession, the Priesthood, the Daily Office, Spiritual Direction, drawing upon the Ordinal as a source. But he also calls upon St Francis of Assisi, St Ignatius of Loyola, George Herbert and other saints of the Church, using phrases such as: 'The priest as the Threshold of Eternity'. And early on he quotes the prayer regularly used by St Francis for us to echo in our hearts: 'Who are you, O Lord my God, and who am I?'

The book has a very full chapter on the Eucharist. As I was reading the chapter my wife came into the room and spoke about a recent development of a telescope surveying over 100 billion galaxies. Such a proposition is mind-blowing considering we, on our planet, are on the edge of part of only one of them; and yet, we have been given a revelation of the Creator of all of this and, in the Eucharist we are joined with this self-same Creator through His Son, Jesus Christ. John-Francis quotes Teilhard de Chardin: 'The words of Christ spoken by the priest over the Bread and the Wine reach into the Cosmos itself so that all matter is affected by them'. For just as the Word spoken is able to create and recreate so the bread broken and the wine outpoured, the very essence of Christ, are able to redeem and restore.

I recommend the book to Christians of all persuasions and as a teaching aid for whatever section of the Journey you happen to be on at this time.

Rev Clive Harper

Notes from the Secretary

Provincial Meetings



The southern province meeting is on 26th May at Guildford Cathedral, starting at 10.30 with coffee/tea, eucharist, lunch in the café (menus available later), speaker, and meeting.

The northern province meeting will again be at Bishopthorpe on 28th May with the same structure.

There was very little feedback from my enquiries about possible improvements to these meetings in the last newsletter so we are continuing with the past structure until we hear to the contrary.



Hopefully, given that this notice is in the Christmas mailing, members will have more notice to make arrangements to attend. We can have up to 60 members at these venues. If you would like to attend please let me know either by e-mail or letter by the end of March at 473 City Road Sheffield S2 1GF or malcolm.liles48@gmail.com

Newsletter circulation

As you will know our newsletter is now mainly distributed by e-mail which gives us a considerable saving. However we can send out hard copies to those who need to receive it in that format. There are currently 80 distributed in that way to people who have let me know that they wish to receive it in this way. If you know of any members who are now missing out on this mode of delivery could you please encourage them to write to me requesting a postal copy.

Since PTO seems to be a continuing theme in this publication can I offer a poem on this theme from a friend of mine Revd. Don Tordoff.

Malcolm Liles

PTO

When I was just a lad in school
I learned a very useful rule:
A page which has two sides of text
will tell you how to find the next
by printing on the bottom row
three simple letters: P T O.

‘Please turn over’ – how polite.
The author’s had the sense to write
this well-known, kind, abbreviation
in the hope and expectation
you will follow this request
so that you can read the rest.

But if you ask young farmer Jim
what these letters mean to him
you'll get a different explanation:
"PTO's an innovation
which lets a tractor work for me
all kinds of machinery.

'Power Take Off' - that's its name -
a great aid to this farming game.
It helps me plough and reap and sow;
spread the muck so crops will grow;
all kinds of work would be so slow
without my tractor's PTO!"

Now in the field of education
a Parent Teacher Organisation
is also known as a PTO
and its obvious why that is so:
the staff and parents must join forces
to help the students with their courses.

A PTO provides a forum
where lack of manners and decorum,
truanting and breaking rules -
in junior or senior schools -
can be discussed and then corrected
so education's unaffected.

But I suspect - in fact I know -
to us those letters P T O
mean quite another kind of state:
'Permission to Officiate'
- from Archbishop Sentamu -
what we can and cannot do.

I was a five year licensee
but now the five's reduced to three -
until that is I am eighty
and then it's one - oh, deary me!
So every year then I'll apply
- it's enough to make you cry!

But do I need to be so nervous?
It's just to check I'm fit for purpose:
that I'm not being overused,
or getting just a bit confused.
If I'm still fit to fight the fight
then I can carry on alright.

Yes, there'll be a form to fill -
though nine pages seems like overkill -
and at the bottom of each sheet,
until the last one's to complete,
I expect that it might well show
that little message: P T O.

Licensed to the job they hold,
or in retirement enrolled,
every deacon, every priest, from the
highest to the least,
whate'er their status or position,
must have episcopal permission.

There is no fix - there's no way round it -
or if there is I haven't found it.
If I want to preach and serve
the bishops' rules I must observe.
So just ignore this tale of woe -
I'm off to get my PTO!

Copyright © 2019 Don Tordoff - used with permission. Don has published a book of his poems accumulated during his ministry, reflecting on his own faith and life, entitled "Faith, Hope, and Hilarity" it is obtainable at £4 from him at Flat 13, Dulverton Hall, Esplanade, Scarborough YO11 2AR don@tordoffs.myzen.co.uk

Une Retraite Différente

I gave the choice of location for our retirement to my wife, as until then she had to follow me parish to parish. We had spent time visiting parts of the European Continent whilst on holiday, and so had an overview of what was possible. She was from Bradford, West Yorks, and did not wish to return there. I was from Bournemouth and she had never liked it. We had ended up with a third of a family holiday property in Carnac 56340 France, and with its sale we had a little capital to invest in a house for retirement. My wife decided that we would retire to Morbihan, 'Little Sea' in Breton. I had been asking my wife what sort of house she would like, and it had to be upstanding like the Vicarage we had had at Allerton in Bradford. So I set to and studied the Immobilier's feuilles de Ouest France.



Gulf de Morbihan

Eventually I saw this house and we came to see it in the winter and decided that we would buy it. Our eighteen years with a holiday home had helped a lot with my fifth language French, and when stuck I usually managed not to use a Bengali word, as it did not help very much. I also was learning some phrases of Breton. We already had a Notaire, a Credit Lyonnais Bank Account and a good relationship with a Hypotheques Company and knew how the Carte Vitale system worked for the Doctor. So the matter was settled and for about £60,000 in 2004 we became the owners of this rather dilapidated house in an acre and a half of grounds. It has a Bow Window, which is also just that in French, reminiscent of Allerton Vicarage.

Events here made it necessary for me to retire in 2007 when I was 69 years of age, and my wife stayed on in Peterborough Cathedral Close for three years to qualify for her pensions.

With local help I had the house re-modelled and it has four en-suite bedrooms, two reception rooms and two studies. The many trees were felled to logs of 44 cm to fit the fire place and I have planted many new ones.

We did attend the Chaplaincy at Ploermel, but it is a long way from here and very exotic, as they speak English, which around here no one does. So it was easier to attend the local Parish Church, which is French Roman Catholic. I shared the Holy Spirit Church at Bretton, Peterborough with a Roman Catholic Congregation, mainly of Irish descent. The Roman Catholic Church of France is nothing like the Irish Roman Catholic Church in England. In English terms the French Roman Catholic Church is very “Low” Church, one candle on the altar is usual, with a vase of flowers. Women are Cantors, assist the Priest and give Communion. The Liturgy is just like Order One of Common Worship. The rubrics are not always followed, and so Communion is only given in one kind. I have lost the need to tell people about how things are done in England, as they think the English are just peculiar. The communities here are very traditional and everyone seems to be related to each other.

There is a severe shortage of priest clergy here, but there are plenty of deacon clergy, who are married. The problem is that the number of young clergy is very small and so work amongst young people is not present in this or nearby parishes.

The Bishop of Vannes, Raymond Centene is always gracious when I turn up at the Chrism Messe in Holy Week. He will be here to dedicate a new Deanery Centre in two weeks’ time and I will go in Cassock and Bands. Normally outside the church building clergy do not wear any sign of their calling, and being retired I copy them, except on special occasions. The local people know me as “Peter” and are entranced when I occasionally appear in my robes.



Vannes

Our priest clergy are Bernard Le Luhel who is the Dean of Pluvigny Deanery of four parishes and he is assisted by a Priest, Guy Le Hennaf, one time a Supervisor in a school, and a Deacon Frederick Cottreel, once a Gendarme, now retired. The use of Le in the surname shows they are British/Bretons. Bernard is a good Liturgist and Guy preaches well. Frederick is competent. As in England we use Hebrew, Latin and Greek, with the main parts in French, but also with Hymns in Breton/Breizenhog. I go to the Deanery Choir Practice and so learn the modern French Church Music. The administration for the services can go astray, so I have developed a practice of setting out what the Readings should be from the aelf website for Sunday Mass readings, and circulating that to those I know in the clergy and congregation, sometimes including commentary by me in French, from my studies of the passages. The French version of the Jerusalem Bible is used and sometimes the text is weak and I set out what it should be. This seems to be acceptable. When the present clergy were appointed, friends in the congregation raised the matter of our family receiving the Communion, and this in accordance with the Rules was immediately agreed. Yaa maat as we say here in Breton, Cheers.

Le révérend Peter M. Hawkins

A response to Bishop Blackburn: The Old Parish Communion Movement

In his article in the Summer issue of this newsletter Bishop Blackburn refers to clergy chasing the rainbow. He extols the old Parish Communion Movement with its strong sense of inclusivity in community. The operative word is probably old. 'The past is a foreign place: they do things differently there.' Michael Parker, the Bishop of Bradford who ordained me in 1965, was a founding member of the Parish Communion movement. But he left it because he feared that the Church of England would become a Eucharistic sect.



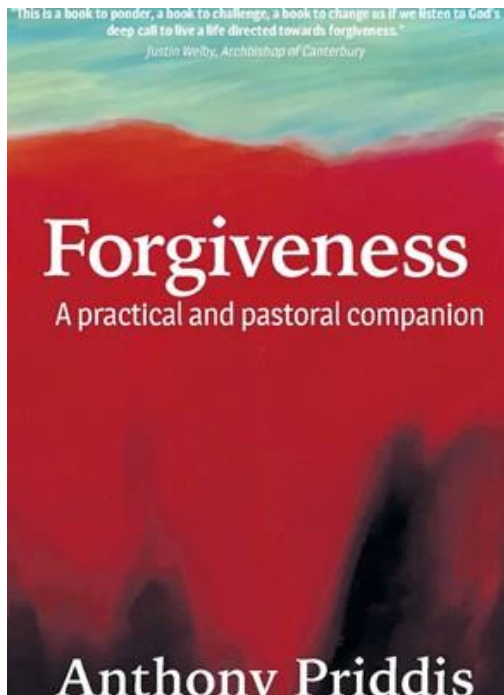
I put this to the Archbishop of York when he was on his pilgrimage. He countered by quoting Acts 2.42 and the Didache, both about 2000 years old. A lot has happened since then. As a mission partner in S E Asia I found some Christians who considered the Communion Service difficult to understand – not least a South Korean professor of Hebrew.

On returning to North Yorkshire I took a communion service with baptism where the baptism party far out numbered the communicants. There was a marked disconnection between the two groups – no inclusivity: a far cry from the days of the Didache. Harvey Cox in the 60's wrote *The Secular City* and at the end of the century *The Fire from Heaven*, a history of the growth of Pentecostalism. He predicted then that Pentecostalism was addressing the disturbances that were coming to us all.

Roger BB Wild

Review: *Forgiveness – a Practical and Pastoral Companion*

by Anthony Priddis Canterbury Press



This is a timely and useful book and Anthony Priddis is well placed as its author. He has had wide pastoral experience in a variety of communities and as Bishop of Hereford he chaired the Church of England's national safeguarding committee. I am not entirely sure that it is accurate to describe it as a Practical Companion, but it certainly has pastoral care as its fundamental concern. This is indeed a resource book despite being relatively brief (120 pages). It covers areas such as why forgiveness is important; what exactly is forgiveness; who can forgive; giving and receiving forgiveness; how communities respond to tragedy; and perhaps most intriguingly, God's forgiveness. Clergy, spiritual directors and anyone engaged in counselling, not to mention those who themselves struggle with the concept of forgiveness, will find this helpful.

There is some pertinent discussion about the whole area of abuse, which we hear about so much now, and how the language used (victim, survivor, "thriver") can affect our understanding of this complex and painful subject. It was good to see mention of restorative justice as a creative way forward for both victims of crime and perpetrators. It would be interesting to see how we as a nation might emerge from all the hurt and frustration of the Brexit situation towards some sense of national reconciliation. There is a lot in this book, awareness of which would help in that process.

+Ian Brackley

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Please note that views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and should not be understood as in any way reflecting the position of RCA

House for Duty in the Church of England

Many clergy are motivated to seek a house for duty post by reason of being unable to afford to buy or rent after a lifetime of living in Vicarages. My first stint as a house for duty clergyman was motivated because I was working in the south of England but could not afford to live there because, having lived in Vicarages all my working life, I had no equity. So a postcode a thirty minute drive from Junction 13 of the M1 had significant benefits.

My second, current, stint was motivated for more complex reasons. I owned my own house outright so accommodation was not an issue. However I had spent some twelve or so years caring for my wife who had MS and Breast Cancer. After her death I met and married again and my new partner, an Occupational Therapist, was of the view that an Occupation was the best therapy.

Having retired at the fairly early of 62, from a job as a Director of a Charity and House for Duty Priest, I felt that I still 'had a job in me'. After taking up my new post I feel valued and am deeply conscious of the privileges that ordained ministry offers to clergy particularly in the parish setting.

I am also privileged in the sense that this is a single parish appointment and on Sunday I can walk to the church, which is directly across the road from my house. The house we live in was built in 1886. It is a splendid house, comfortable, spacious and excellent for parties. I have also benefitted from age discrimination legislation and have a Bishop's Licence for five years, despite having been appointed in 2018 at the age of 73, after a medical which declared me to be fit and in good health. So far then the news is very good indeed.

But what my new wife and I are finding is that there are constraints and challenges as well as benefits to the role of House for Duty Priest and 'Vicar's' wife.

On the positive side the Archdeacon and the Diocesan Property Manager have been extremely supportive. Conversations regarding works to make the house more comfortable have always been amicable and there is a good relationship between ourselves, the contractors, and Diocesan Staff. However, we moved into the House in late November 2018 and to date we have put 4500 litres of oil into the tank and used a substantial amount of coal and wood. The grounds are so huge that we also have to have some help in the extensive gardens.

According to the Church of England's guidance on House for Duty appointments, presumably agreed with HMRC, the house is a 'benefit in kind' which requires a time commitment of two days plus Sunday to ensure that it is not viewed as taxable income. Which is fine, except that, despite the Archdeacon's view that I must take two days a week off, back to back, I find that most days I have some parish business to take care of: a pastoral crisis, a funeral, wedding preparation, concerts, parish lunches, afternoon teas, festivals and film nights. All those activities are both work and pleasure – pleasure because you might do them anyway, but work because you are the 'Vicar' and "if I could just ask"?

As a stipendiary priest I received tax relief on the costs of heating and lighting my Vicarage and for garden upkeep. As a House for Duty priest I do not receive these benefits. My wife, who has never been a 'Vicar's' wife before, is beginning to recognise the rise in housekeeping costs as she offers entertainment, buns, cakes and biscuits to contractors, parish meetings and to callers by.

According to the Diocese a House for Duty priest costs £20,000 a year. (The parish share for this parish is £38, 000, which was paid in full during the two years of the vacancy.) I cannot question the maths in this calculation because I do not know how the calculation is made. However from where I sit, stand, preach or celebrate Mass, it does rather feel as though I am subsidising the Church of England out of my pension and the rental income from my property.

If I was relying on my pension alone (which was reduced because I retired early to be a carer) I could not afford to occupy this house (Energy Efficiency Rating G). This feeling is strengthened by the fact that the Diocesan and Church of England view of fees has changed since I was last in a stipendiary post and I do not benefit from any fee income at all. The House and grounds are expensive to maintain whilst being a joy to live in. So there is real dilemma in all of this.

This parish was originally founded from a nearby Abbey. Apparently the support for the priest was set at £28 annually. (I recently received a book token in that amount from the Trustees of the Foundation.)

There are costs borne by the Diocese, for e.g. Continuing Ministerial Education, the Hierarchy, Diocesan Synod and associated structures together with any subvention to the National Church, but from the parish that all seems a long way away and not especially necessary. Whether all that amounts to £20,000 I do not know but would love to have it explained to me.

Recently I was advised that the sum is arrived at via a valuation of the rental cost of the house, this may be so but the rental cost of the house is far, far lower than £20,000. Indeed a modern house will offer greater benefits and be less costly than a large inefficient 19th Century house.

The costs of fulfilling the role will also vary. In a previous (house for duty) parish I did not claim expenses and gave generously to the parish because my job was in fact very well paid. Now I have a pension that is 13½% less than it should be because I retired early to care for a disabled partner. I pay tax on my Church and State pensions. My Civil Service pension and a small annuity are paid net of tax.

Another House for Duty priest in the Deanery calculates that she works a 50 hour week on average and that it costs her £70 a week to live in the house. I am a less efficient book keeper but that seems about right to me. Certainly I rarely work fewer than five days a week and sometimes more. So, whilst as it says in the Communion Prayer: 'It is a duty and a Joy,' it is also I think yet to be thought through.

The Church of England is planning for a future where belief is the exception rather than the rule, where there will be fewer clergy, where lay involvement will have of necessity to be greater. If there is to be a greater reliance on retired clergy to continue to work then the terms and conditions of that work need, I believe, to be thought out more carefully and fairly than at present they are.

The deal that the national church has done with HMRC values a house specifically as worth two days plus a Sunday's worth of work, irrespective of context. However, each parish and each particular situation is in fact different.

Canon Geoff Smith

Review: 'York Courses' New editions 2019 -2020

York Courses come with a continuing reputation – they are reliable, interesting, engaging and they are good conversations starters. They are good for ecumenical groups. Everyone can get something out of them and can offer something back into the ongoing conversations. These courses open hearts and minds. That is why they are so well known and trusted. Two new courses are now available and they are worth giving serious consideration if you are planning group work for say Advent or Lent.



Superstar Five sessions, suitable for Lent or anytime

This course is written by David Wilbourne and includes contributions by Stephen Wigley, Carmody Grey, Catherine Fox, and Steve Chalice. It reminds us that it is 50 years since *Jesus Christ Superstar* first appeared on the stage. The show delighted many and horrified some. Its arrival raised much discussion concerning whether it was actually a 'Christian' show or not as it missed out the Resurrection of Jesus.

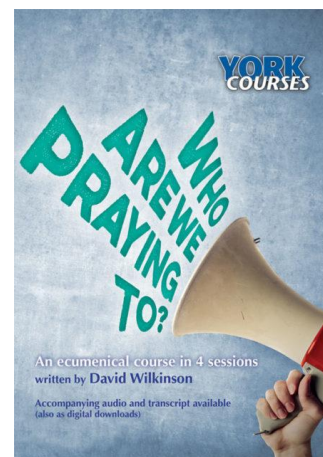
For many it was a show of its time and now it looks and sounds somewhat dated. However, this course takes five themes about Jesus, Miracles, The Psalms, The Church and Cross Purposes and puts them to the test for today.

David Wilbourne makes it clear that for him J.C. Superstar 'gave colour to my former monochrome faith, firing my vocation and shaping my writing and my preaching'. The recorded conversations are lively. You may not always agree with what is being said but that starts conversations. This course may very well help people to rediscover Jesus through their own pilgrim journey. This is not an easy course. It will require some hard thinking by all concerned, from whichever part of the 'church' you might come but there is no harm in that. This is a series of conversations and questions that are worth staying with and thinking about. David Wilbourne remembers J.C. Superstar firing his faith. I remember taking a large party of my youth club to see the show. Whether it fired their faith I'm not sure but it fired most of them into a lifelong love of going to the theatre and that was no bad thing.

Who are you praying to? Four sessions, suitable Advent or any time

'The best evangelism is always about real conversations and real relationships, in which both parties are open to each other and willing to learn, grow and change.' So says Dr Threffall-Holmes at the very start of this course's guide book.

I have always puzzled about the word 'real' in such comments. What does she mean by 'real'? Who decides if a conversation or relationship is 'real'? As a base for listening and for the subsequent conversations this course uses passages from 2 Corinthians, John's Gospel and, much to my delight, that now 'unfashionable' biblical book, Job.



These form the base from which each person might consider their prayer life anew. The recorded conversations consider 'Praying with confidence', 'Praying in the face of unanswered prayer' and 'Praying for the marginalised'. These conversations, though rather earnest in tone, give some clues about prayer but not very much about to whom you might be talking. The final session comes to the rather obvious conclusion that all rests on hope in God. York courses are well used and appreciated by many and will I am sure continue to be. However, I did not warm to this one I fear. The concentration on talking 'TO' in the course did not resonate with my own experience of talking 'WITH' in prayer.

Christopher Wardale

Review: Revised New Jerusalem Bible Study Edition DLT Hardback £39.99

'Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God, translating and giving the sense; so the reading was understood.' (Ne 8:8) In that single verse Nehemiah sums up what a good translation should achieve - to give the sense so that the work translated is understood. And that is exactly what is achieved by this third iteration of the Jerusalem Bible, following the 1960's original and the New JB in the 1980's.

Ostensibly the initial impetus for this revised version was Pope Benedict's acceptance that the Church should not use the vocalisation of the divine name, printed as *Yahweh* in previous versions of the JB, but this could have been achieved by a simple 'find and replace' on the text of the OT, changing it to THE LORD as has been done in the Roman Lectionary from the start. But not one to do things by halves, Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB decided that this was an opportunity for a thorough revision, indeed more of a fresh translation, which he duly set about more or less single handedly this time. And what an achievement it is!

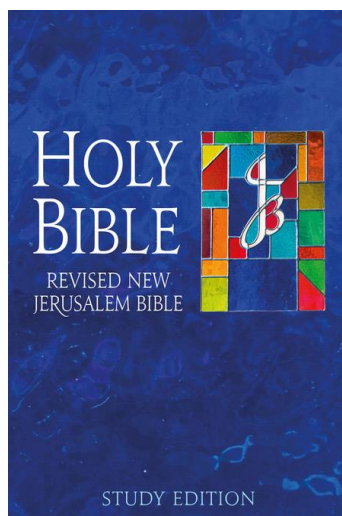
Having plenty of time to prepare this review as this magazine is quarterly, I decided that rather than jump to my favourite passages I would simply use it in my daily prayer for a month or two and let that guide me as to what to read. Thus I began with the Elijah cycle and went on to complete Kings and continue into Nehemiah before moving to 2 Peter and then the prophecy of Amos, and finally Luke's Gospel, before I did look up a few of my favourite passages.

The decision to use the Revised Grail Psalter rather than make a new translation of the Psalms means that there is no need to have a separate psalter if using this Bible in worship as this translation is designed for prayerful recitation.

The English language of course has a bias towards male terminology, but Dom Henry has done his best to render this translation inclusively wherever this is possible without spoiling the flow. An unusual (and to me welcome) feature is the use of metric units for weights and measures – thus we read that Goliath was 3 metres tall, while Nicodemus brought an astonishing 50 kilograms of myrrh and aloes for the burial of Jesus! Sensibly he does not do the same with monetary values as these can change quite quickly and would potentially date the book (and which currency from the English speaking world would you use anyway?).

Any translation has to include a degree of paraphrase to make it work. If you translate the French *chemin de fer* literally (as would the current Roman Missal which sadly fails to grasp this) you would get the rather clumsy ‘I went to London by the way of iron.’ A semi-literal, but better translation might render it ‘railway’ but to make real sense in English you would say, ‘I went to London on the train’ as an English person would. Though not a literal translation this is entirely faithful to the original while being more correctly English.

And that is really what this translation of the Bible is – it reads like an English book, as though written in English by an English writer, and what better commendation is there than that?



Briefly to deal with practicalities, this is a large book, perhaps a strange size (slightly smaller than A5 page size but 7cm thick and weighing 1.5 kg). Two ribbon markers are included which is helpful, but of necessity the paper is quite thin allowing some show through from the page behind. The text size is only just large enough to be read comfortably by this reader, but it is set out in a single column per page like a normal book (why are Bibles so often printed in double columns?) which enhances its readability. If a penny short of £40 seems expensive for a Bible (though at the time of writing you can buy it for a fair bit less online), this edition includes introductions to each book and copious notes, making it almost a one volume Bible Commentary as well as a Bible itself.

You can also buy the New Testament and Psalms for £12.99 (or less) and in due course I expect other versions will be released with fewer notes – indeed currently a pocket version is planned, though it remains to be seen how big a pocket you might need to carry it in!

Apologies for not printing the name of this reviewer: I've managed to mislay it Ed

**Please send items for the next Newsletter
to Robin Isherwood at
revslob@gmail.com before the end of February 2020**