

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Mark my words



Dear Friends,

"A lively punchy style" We tend to look for this when reading articles in our newspapers and magazines but have we considered how Mark's Gospel is just that too?

We are coming to the end of our readings from Mark's Gospel in our services this year and perhaps we can once again linger over the passages that we will hear. Mark always draws us right into the story, and he encourages us to enter imaginatively into Jesus' world, to walk with Jesus and his disciples, to feel the challenge to the then authorities, and the wonder of the crowd, to see Jesus' miracles and hear his preaching. Mark uses the phrase 'and immediately' more than any other gospel making his gospel fresh and animated.

We can be drawn into the story and encouraged even today in the 21st century to respond to the "Good news of Jesus Christ the Son of God"(Mark1:1)just as his audience in the 1st Century.

As Mark also pointed out at the start of his Gospel, this is only the beginning of the Good News of Jesus and not the end of it , in other words the beginning starts with Jesus Christ and now continues with us responding, living out his teaching and love in our lives! How amazing to be drawn into this, as one theologian puts it; *God in process*, God working through us.

Let's listen to the remaining chapters of Mark as they are read in Church and let us respond, living out the Good news, looking around us at the brightness and vivacity of creation experiencing God at work in in the lives of ourselves and those around us.

This month the Church remembers the life of William Tyndale who was martyred on 6th October 1536 because he dared to translate the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek into the English language, influencing Shakespeare and providing about 80% of the King James Bible put together in the next century. Today we forget what bravery went into our having access to the Bible in a language we can understand and we may take our Bibles for granted, leaving them unread on our shelves!

This well-loved ancient collect helps us to put into perspective how we need to lead lives in the light of the liveliness of Scripture:

"Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."

Collect written by Thomas Cranmer, *The Book of Common Prayer* (1549)

Love Jo

A Street Word called Respect

On 12th September, the House of Bishops by an overwhelming majority settled the text of the legislation to enable women to become bishops in the Church of England.

The new wording was proposed by the Reverend Janet Appleby, a vicar from North

Tyneside. Janet lives in an inner city parish and the word that is important to the young people in her parish is "respect". Janet suggested this wording helping out in the long debates that have been challenging members of the Church of England over Women Bishops.

The House of Bishops made clear its desire for the draft legislation to be passed into law when it goes forward for final approval to the Church of England's General Synod in November.

Speaking on behalf of the House at the conclusion of their meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Rowan Williams said:

"Before turning to the matters we have been discussing, I want to say, on behalf of the Bishops, that our thoughts and prayers are very much with the people of Liverpool and all affected by the Hillsborough tragedy on this day when the report is released. The Bishop of Liverpool has done a great service in steering this work to a conclusion and helping us as a nation to confront this deeply traumatic memory."

Dr. Williams continued:

"Since women were first made priests in the Church of England in 1994, their ministry has hugely enriched both church and society. It has become increasingly clear to most of us that barring women from becoming bishops is an anomaly that should be removed, for the good of the Church's mission and service.

"In July this year, the General Synod asked the House of Bishops to reconsider an alteration it had made to the proposed legislation on this subject. The Bishops have taken very seriously the anxieties expressed about the possible implications of their amendment and there has been widespread consultation since then. We are very grateful for all the points and suggestions offered by synod members and others.

"In light of this consultation, the Bishops have discussed the measure again and are now

bringing forward a new text that expresses both our conviction of the need to see this legislation passed and our desire to honour the conscience and contribution of those in the Church of England whose reservations remain.

"It is particularly significant and welcome that the new text emerged not from the House of Bishops itself but rather from a serving woman priest.

"I hope all members of Synod will now reflect carefully on what the Bishops have decided and will continue to give thought and prayer to how they will vote in November."

"I am convinced that the time has come for the Church of England to be blessed by the ministry of women as bishops and it is my deep hope that the legislation will pass in November."

At its meeting in July the General Synod asked the House of Bishops to reconsider a provision in the legislation - Clause 5(1)(c) of the draft measure.

The new amendment submitted by the Rev. Janet Appleby during the consultation process received overwhelming support from the House of Bishops in both their discussions and in the final vote.

In discussion the Bishops welcomed the simplicity of the new text, its emphasis on respect and the process of dialogue with parishes that it will promote.

The final text proposed by the House of Bishops is:

Substitute for the words in clause 5(1)(c): "*the selection of male bishops and male priests in a manner which respects the grounds on which parochial church councils issue Letters of Request under section 3*"

The House also agreed to establish a group to develop the illustrative draft Code of Practice published in January to give effect to the new provision.