



AD CLERUM

From the Bishop

February 2018

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Christianity is not a very introspective faith. The gospel proclaims that we are forgiven by the death of Jesus and calls us to live by the power of the Spirit God has given us in the reality of the world God has made and sustains.

In Lent though, we are reminded that before Jesus set out on the ministry to which he was called, He was driven by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to face up to the temptations that would accompany Him as he set out to do God's will.

We are beset by temptations and the beginning of knowing how to resist them is to work out what it is within us, each as individuals, that cries out to succumb. We are each different and one will be impervious to the sins that constantly dog another.

Knowing ourselves is key. Navel gazing is not a Christian virtue but in Lent we are encouraged to face the inward journey, to become more self aware so that we may learn to co-operate with the Spirit's work within us, the aim of which is that we become Christlike: "All of us, gazing on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled faces, are being transfigured into that same image from one degree of glory to another" (II Cor 3:18).

Becoming Christlike is not airy fairy process that happens despite us. Peter urges us "make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brother affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Pet 1:5-8 ESV).

We are called, day by day, to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in making the image of Christ real in our words and actions and Lent is the time the Church has set aside for us to take a long hard look at ourselves.

It has become less fashionable to give things up for Lent but denying ourselves things that are intrinsically good to give ourselves practice in self denial is the time honoured practice of the Church and one which is practised assiduously by our Orthodox brothers and sisters. This is not about developing determination but learning to understand ourselves, our motivations and the support mechanisms we have developed for ourselves.

Depriving ourselves of what gives us comfort is a self created opportunity to learn how to draw strength from the Spirit so that we may better rely on God in difficult situations that are not of our own making. Lent is the Christian equivalent of going to the gym. Let us take the opportunity of Lent to give ourselves a workout so that we may be kept "from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Every blessing,

+ Joanna Tydder

Clergy Conference 2018: What next?

At the CMD day on Feb 1st, three presentations were given, one about each archdeaconry and Mrs Lindy Wainwright gave a presentation about becoming a community of practice. The process of establishing LMAs requires those who will be part of the Ministry Team coming together and deciding how they are going to organise their working together in the future.

The Revd Marianne Osborne or someone from the Transition Team will set up meetings for the LMA in the run up to the formal formation of the LMA but regardless of where your LMA is on the timescale, the journey to becoming an LMA starts now.

Every team is required to come together to put together a presentation about their LMA to be shown to others within the same Archdeaconry at the Clergy conference. It isn't meant to be a presentation about the churches, buildings or otherwise, but about the social and economic context in which the church communities are set, the challenges and opportunities for people living the area and the consequent opportunities for mission and service.

As an exercise, it will bring out what you already know and perhaps open your eyes to things you didn't and to the resources out there that can give useful information about the lives of those to whom our congregations minister.

It is a specific task that requires you to work together across parish boundaries which may help as you also begin to reflect on how you are going to work together in the future. You will learn as you do it but you will also learn from how other approached the task when you see other people's presentations.

You have a 10 minute slot, but what form your presentation takes is up to you. David Hammond Williams, our communications officer, is more than welcome to come along to help you.

If you haven't already done so, you will need to arrange a meeting to get this underway; the Clergy conference will be here all too soon.

At the Clergy conference, there will be opportunities for prayer and worship; we will be having scriptural input from three of our own clerics and Dr Anne Richards from the Mission and Public Affairs Council of the C of E will be coming to speak to us about contemporary mission and evangelism. The aim of our time together is to take seriously the GB's injunction to us to focus on mission and evangelism and to root our reflection on it in serious reflection on the specific realities of our own context

Local Ministry Areas: Update

We have now begun the process of forming our new LMAs and drawing together the teams which will lead the ministry and mission within them. We all know this is going to be challenging. It will involve us all in working together in new ways, that go against the grain. Many clergy are not used to working together in teams and lay people simply want their own parish priest.

We are setting out on this journey of change not because we no longer believe in our traditional way of being church or because we think our old way of working is wrong but because we need to ensure that we only employ the number of clergy that we can afford, that those stipendiary clergy are evenly spread and that clergy are working in a healthy and sustainable way.

We can no longer provide the number of stipendiary clergy that we need for every sustainably size benefice to have one each. We could close churches but that is a recipe for retrenchment and

decline. Instead, we need to grow and develop a new sustainable, healthy and fair way of providing ministry to and through our churches at a very local level.

We have already successfully experimented with new ways of providing ministry locally and I would like to pay tribute to all our NSM(L)s and those, whether as licensed ministers or not, who are Focal ministers. We have branched out beyond our traditional patterns of ministry and it is giving us life and hope. Let us see what this new way of working together in LMAs will produce.

It is important to remember that our new ways of working are about resourcing exactly the same thing: local communities of Christians living out their faith. It is not about change for changes sake but change so that we can continue to be the Church across the towns and villages of our Diocese.

Some reassurances:

Each LMA has a number that denotes the minimum number of stipendiary clerics it will be allocated. If there are more stipendiary clerics in the LMA than the number allocated, there are no plans to make anyone redundant.

Retired clergy are still valued and can still be asked to take services but it is important that LMA ministry teams only set up a rota of regular services that can be sustained by the people in the ministry team, which means not having more services on a Sunday that each minister is permitted to take. To have a rota that requires retired clergy to keep it going is neither healthy nor sustainable nor is it fair on retired clergy.

I have no plans to close any of our churches. Some buildings are no longer sustainable because no one worships there any more, or the maintenance costs are too high, or the bill for needed repairs cannot be met and if I am asked, I shall agree to closure but I have no plans to initiate the closure of any of our church buildings against the wishes of the LMA unless public safety demands it.

Finally....

Being a part of St Davids diocese is to be a part of the Christian community that owes its life to the prayer, mission and ministry of our patron saint. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever and He can grow and nourish the Church through us in our day as He has done in the days from St Davids until now. St David's community gave itself wholeheartedly to God in prayer, liturgy, service and evangelism. It is to that commitment that we are also called. As we approach the yearly marking of St David's death, let us ask God to teach us how to so live and pray that our generation too may birth the Church for the next 1500 years.