



Columcille

**The Bishop of Argyll
And The Isles' Newsletter. No 33**

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Dear Friends,

You are receiving this letter very early because Elspeth and I plan to be away for a weeks holiday and then I have a conference immediately afterwards.

Over the next year, I am hoping that we can develop clearer structures and resources with regard to Congregational Development. For some time, throughout The Province, there has been a developing process of each Diocese taking responsibility for education and training both of Lay people and Clergy. The Reverend Doctor Anne Tomlinson who is the Provincial Director of Local Collaborative Ministry will be leaving this work at the end of December although she may be available to us on an occasional basis.. Therefore, all of us in the Diocese have the exciting and challenging opportunity to address God's Mission with adventure and conviction. This will mean using all the creative work that Anne has done with us over the years. I have asked a small team within the Diocese to begin work on how we can assist our charges to address effectively what God is asking of us.

Congregational Development means acknowledging and rejoicing in what God is already doing in each charge and developing our Mission and Spirituality with courage.

So, I would ask you to look at our Diocesan website where you will see a

series of questions and answers prepared by Anne Tomlinson on Local Collaborative Ministry.

As I write this letter there are a number of International crises which are currently stretching the greatest of diplomatic minds. On top of this, we have the growing anxiety over decreasing confidence in our financial markets and institutions. The temptation is to feel so overwhelmed by all this that we retreat into increasing individualism and avenues of self protection, which although understandable, only increases the fear and the deterioration.

Although there is an almost impregnable complexity in all this, there is now a growing sense of the irresponsibility, not to mention greed in major financial institutions. High ethical standards must be regained.

One of the points of being a Diocese is that we have a mutual care and responsibility towards one another despite the distances and our lack of resources. Our attitudes towards the Big Picture will either be an example of strength and courage or a retreat into protectionism. In particular I would ask you to be aware of those whose fears and anxieties are felt acutely because they live on their own or because of some other vulnerability they do not have many resources to cope with disturbing images on the media.

URGENT REMINDERDIOCESAN RETREAT 2008 (27th -31st Oct)****

There are still places on the Diocesan Retreat. Please think seriously about participating in the Retreat which will be, as usual on Cumbrae. The retreat conductor will be The Reverend Canon Brian Hardy, an experienced Retreat Conductor and Spiritual Director. The cost of the retreat will be £160 and £50 a day for those who can only come for part of the time. Contact tccumbrae@argyll.anglican.org or telephone 01475 530353.

Harvest Festival

There is a great deal of liturgical resource material for Harvest-tide. By using Google you can look in particular in "Oremus". If you are looking for advice as to creative Harvest material please do get in touch with me. Many charges start planning for the festival well in advance!

May I recommend that you have a special collection for "FARMAfrica" You can get in touch with the organisation for lots of activities for children and for congregations. www.farmafrica.org.uk-givepovertytheboot

Argyll and Bute Choose Life Initiative

The NHS Highland Health Promotion Team in Argyll and Bute has been busy in the last few months raising people's awareness of important sensible drinking and mental health messages. Coupled with this there is a concern to reduce suicide and self harm generally. There are a series of events being held in particular in Inveraray in the autumn and winter. For more information please use the website www.chooselifeinargyllandbute.org.uk

Rural Ministry Course – 4-6th Nov 2008

This, of course, is a very rural Diocese. The future shape of its Ministry and indeed of The Church as a whole is a challenging one for us. I am inviting members of the Diocese to think seriously about attending this course not only for your own charges but also for the Diocese as a whole.

The course will be held at The Arthur Rank Centre in Warwickshire. If you are interested in going I would be able to help with some of the funding. Please get in touch with me.

The Millennium Development Goals

The Scottish Episcopal Church supports the aims of The Millennium Development Goals and wishes to make them part of Church life. Like the wee Scottish flying beastie **MidGies** will become persistent in the lives of Episcopalians and inform the decisions we make as individuals, congregations, Diocese and The Province. The goals are available on a small card the size of a credit card and are stated simply on one side. Maybe all of us should know them by heart! To obtain these cards please get in touch with the Provincial office in Edinburgh.

A Quiet Day for Scotland.

Jane Elliott writes: *The vision is to organise the provision of quiet spaces, which will be accessible to all communities in Scotland on or around St Andrew's Day (1st December). At a busy time of year, this will provide people with a much needed opportunity deepen their prayer lives. A resource pack is now available from ACTS (– All Churches Together in Scotland). The material is offered as flexible suggestions and can be applied to local circumstances and use. The website is:* www.acts-scotland.org

If you would like further help and advice please contact Jane Elliot mrsjane.elliott@virgin.net

If you have no access to the Internet please phone Jane Elliott on 01852 300780.

Advent 2008

ACTS – Action of Churches Together in Scotland has created downloadable resources for Advent. This years material "Advent is not just for Christmas" contains Bible Readings, Prayer suggestions and Hymns to focus on. The material has been prepared by Norah Summers of The Church of Scotland's Church Life Network. Please use the website www.acts-scotland.org

Request for Help

There are a number of people in training for various forms of Ministry in the Scottish Episcopal Church who live in this Diocese. Obviously we do not have a readily available Theological Library. The suggestion has been made that we create an On-line Catalogue of Theology and related subjects from people around the Diocese who have such books on their own shelves. Is there someone in the Diocese who would be prepared to create such an online catalogue? This would mean getting in touch with Clergy and Laity mostly by email to form the catalogue. If you are interested please do get in touch with me. Once the catalogue is created it will then be put on the Diocesan website.

Retreats, Workshops and Music – Cumbrae

29th Sept-3rd Oct Celtic Retreat (The Warden) £200 (£50 per night)

27th-31st Oct – Diocesan Retreat (led by Canon Brian Hardy) £160 (£50 per night)

31st Oct-2nd Nov – Friends AGM

8th Nov – Messiah from Scratch: a chance to sing your heart out (10am-7pm, with coffee, tea and lunch) £25

14th-16th Nov – The Orthodox Church (Canon Keith Pagan) £100

28th – 30th November – Advent Retreat (The Warden) and Advent Carol Service (£100)

24th-29th Dec. Christmas House Party (£250)

For further retreats see the website www.island-retreats.org

For further details and bookings contact the warden at 01475 530353 or tccumbrae@argyll.anglican.org

The Diocesan Website –

www.argyllandtheisles.org.uk

Please remember if you have any information or changes to make please contact Hazel Morris directly at Hazel@sitemaker1.com

Or by telephoning 01680 300343. If Hazel is unavailable please contact Audrey Walton at The Diocesan Office.

Please remember that the newsletter and the magazine are available on the publications page of the website.

For your diary -Provincial Conference 2009 2nd- 4th October

“Living Well: Proclaim, Discover, Respond”

At The MacDonald Highland Resort, Aviemore.

The theme of the conference is The Five Marks of Mission (see newsletter No 29)

Conference information will be sent out in September in the Clergy mailing. Information will also be available on the Provincial Website under PC09. There will be a subsidy towards the conference fee for a limited number of delegates

THE BISHOP'S OCTOBER DIARY

18th – 28th – On holiday

29th Sept – 2nd Oct – Celtic Bishops Conference, Chepstow Wells.

4th and 5th Oct – Lecturing at Annual Conference of The Churches Fellowship of Psychic and Spiritual Studies.

6th Oct – IRL Board

7th Oct – Diocesan Standing Committee, 10.30am

10th-12th Oct LCM Review weekend, St Margaret's, Whiting Bay, Arran

14th and 15th – College of Bishops Residential

16th Oct – Iona Abbey – Address to The Iona Community

19th Oct – Celebrate and Preach at the Cursillo Closing Eucharist, Cumbrae

23rd-25 Oct – Winchester College

27th-31st Oct – Diocesan Retreat, Cumbrae

Reflection

Someone asked me recently to explain something of the heart of Eastern orthodox Christianity. What follows, demands some studying, but also it is there for you to pray with.

The Doctrine of God.

"In western theology, the doctrine of God usually rests on the notion of abstract being, and God can be defined as the Being whose essence equals existence. This God maybe pure act, but the conception is static. God seems separate from all reality, its ground and cause, but not its fabric and life. The model is Aristotle's Unmoved Mover. In the east, God is all energy and movement. He is the God of Life, physical and spiritual. God is not abstract but all act, and there is no actor separate from the action. This Eastern doctrine of God does distinguish between God's "essence" and His "energies" and God remains unknowable in His "essence". But in His "energies", both uncreated and created, God exists in the world, ad extra, available to all because he is the energy of all. The dominant image of this divine energy, one of God's manifestations, is light, and created light is understood as a physical form or expression of the uncreated light. In the piety of eastern Christianity sanctity is marked, not by stigmata, but by a transfiguring light which permeates and emanates from the body... Dostoevsky's slanting rays of light from the sun and Tolstoy's sky permeated with light emanating from a central source are literary images of this eastern Christian doctrine of God."

[From Gustafson: 'Resident and Stranger'- A study of the work of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky].

In the Love of God, +Martin, Oban