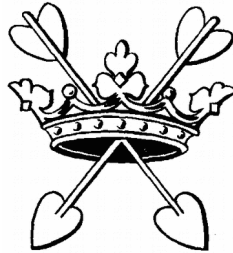


The Parish of St. Edmund, King and Martyr



The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada

UPDATE

October 4, 2003 - **St. Francis of Assisi**

November Schedule

November 1	Saturday	-	All Saints Day
November 2	Sunday	-	The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity
November 3	Monday	-	All Souls Day
November 9	Sunday	-	The Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity - Remembrance Sunday
November 16	Sunday	-	The Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity
November 21	Friday	-	St. Edmund, King and Martyr
November 23	Sunday	-	The Sunday next before Advent - The Feast of Christ the King
November 30	Sunday	-	Advent Sunday

Service Times and Location

(1) All Services are held in the Chapel at Luther Village on the Park - 139 Father David Bauer Drive in Waterloo.

(2) On Sundays, **Matins** is sung at **10:00 a.m.** (The **Litany** on the first

Sunday of the month), and the **Holy Eucharist** is celebrated (sung) at **10:30 a.m.**

(3) On weekdays - **Holy Days** and **Days of Obligation** (Diocesan Ordo) - the **Holy Eucharist** is *usually* celebrated at **7:00 p.m.** when the Chapel is available - please phone to confirm.

Notes and Comments

- 1) Another reminder - **Friday, November 21 - our Title Feast Day** - Mass at 6:00 p.m., followed by dinner in Martin's Restaurant - mark your calendars and plan to be here! (Due to conflicts, we had to transfer from November 20.)
- 2) Thanks to **Mrs. Mary Maxwell** for the new altar and credence cloths; and, to seamstress **Mrs. Mary McGibbon** for the new white vestments.
- 3) Our illustrious leader's **Bit** - this page.
- 4) Helen's contribution - **Meet Phillis Wheatley** - page 4.
- 5) **1984** - some sobering words - **Free Speech Endangered** - page 4.
- 6) This one's got it right! - **BAPTISTS: No sympathy here** - page 5.
- 7) Letter from America - **'Tis the time's plague when madmen lead the blind** - page 7.
- 8) Unlucky **13** - **Pervasive, false, and debilitating** - page 8.
- 9) Comfortable Pew or 'bricks and mortar' - **The bondage of the will** - page 9.

The Bishop's Bit

Robin Hood

"Let me have length and breadth enough,
And under my head a sod;
That they may say when I am dead,
Here lies Robin Hood".
(Anonymous ballad, *The Death of Robin Hood*)

Some months ago in this column I mentioned, just briefly in passing, that Mirfield is one of several places which claim to have the grave of Robin Hood.

Historians can not be certain there ever was such a person. If he did exist,

historians can not be certain as to when or where. But Robin and his merry men are such a marvellous story, most of us want it to be true, most of us hope there is at least a grain of truth among the chaff: Maid Marion, Friar Tuck, Little John, robbing the rich to feed the poor, the wicked sheriff of Nottingham. Incidentally, *Mirfield* is a corruption of the Anglo Saxon, *Merryfield*. The present parish does go back to Saxon times. Once there was even an encampment of the Roman army on the site.

The city of Nottingham in the county of Nottinghamshire is real enough, a county which later became famous for lace making, coal mining and the novelist, D H Lawrence. The remains of Sherwood Forest are close by the city, where very ancient oaks are protected and propped up, as having been there in Robin's day (if he existed, that is). In the forest is an unconvincing museum devoted to the legend. It is said that this deciduous forest reached northwards into Yorkshire. Today there is a Suffragan Bishop of Sherwood, assistant to the Bishop of Southwell.

At Mirfield was a priory of Cistercian nuns, who farmed an estate called Kirklees. One of their fund raisers was a mill, powered by the Calder River, where for a fee the nuns would grind the grain of local peasant farmers. In 1530 - something when the rapacious and evil King Henry VIII despoiled all monasteries, Kirklees also got the chop. By then there were only three sisters left. They went without a murmur, and were given a pension plus a house in the village, where they lived together until extinct. Until recently that Tudor house still stood. One assumes the three old ladies continued praying together. Kirklees was given or sold to Sir Robert Armytage, whose descendants went on living there until recently. A Tudor hostelry was erected on the edge of the property, on the main road between Huddersfield and Leeds. It was called *The Three Nuns*. Its descendant is still there, and does a roaring trade selling ale and square meals to hardy Yorkshiremen. Several smaller municipalities have been

forcibly amalgamated, Mirfield, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury, and others. Collectively they are now known as *Kirklees*.

The Armytages built themselves a modern house, modern in the sixteenth century that is. The old nunnery was abandoned; it fell into disrepair. Its ruin stands on the farm. I used to marvel at the skyscrapers of manure alongside its walls.

Robin's aunt was a Cistercian prioress (if he existed, that is). He fled to her for hiding. She poisoned him to death. As he lay in bed dying, he shot an arrow through the open window and up the hill. He said to Little John, "Bury me where that falls". Sure enough, a short distance from the ruins of the nunnery is Robin's grave (if he existed, that is.) An illegible inscription marks the stone. The grave is protected by an iron railing. Members of the public are not allowed in to pay their respects, though the Armytages did allow the Mirfield Fathers to do so. Why such privacy?

In the early nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution came to Yorkshire. Three new parishes were needed in the locality. Before the advent of the railways, canals were necessary for transportation. Irish navvies or labourers came to dig the canals and build the locks. And whenever these navvies had toothache or headache, they would chip a little off Robin's grave (if he existed, that is), and stick the chip in their hatbands to cure the pain. The Armytages realized that soon there'd be no grave left.

In very recent years an ex pilot from the Royal Navy bought the ruins of the nuns' former mill on the banks of the Calder. He also bought a lot of old stone from all over the county. He has erected a fine new hostelry called *The Millstone*. It too sells ale and square meals to hardy Yorkshiremen.

Wouldn't it be a shame if, after all this local enthusiasm, there turned out to be no such person as Robin! At any rate, if you stand on the cricket field at the House

of the Resurrection, or if you look out from the upstairs library, you can admire Kirklees straight ahead of you. If you stare fixedly, without looking at the sewage works, the smoke stacks, the industry, off to the left, you can pretend to yourself you are in rural England.

And it is historical fact that in 627 St Paulinus, Archbishop of York, did baptize the pagan king Edwin in the Calder, though not in Mirfield.

+Robert Mercer CR

By **The Bishop Ordinary - The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada**

From here and there

a) Recent research by the **Polling Company** indicates that 63% of 18-24 year olds are pro-life (regardless of education).

b) Yesterday I saw a car with bumper stickers all over its rear of the Hug-a-Tree, Stay-Out-of-Iraq, Phooey-on-Bush, God-bless-Darwin variety. Sure enough, driving it was an elderly gentleman with a beard. The hippies are getting old, but are distinguished from other examples of senility by having lost their grip fifty years ago. **S. M. Hitchens**, in *Mere Comments*.

c) Television has done much for psychiatry by spreading news about it, as well as contributing to the need for it. **Alfred Hitchcock**

d) **Acronyms** - An interesting story about the coining of LASER (for "Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation") is that the initial description of this physical concept was to be "Light Oscillation by Stimulated Emission of Radiation". Why the "oscillation" was replaced by "amplification" is amply clear from the two possible acronyms! **J. Ramanand**

e) Words where the first letter **looks** like what the word **means**:
Mountains

Wavy
Slippery
Valley
Curved
Obese
house (with chimney)
Arrowhead
Trellis
Snake
Zigzag
Pregnant

Meet Phillis Wheatley

Reading the article "The Feminist Approach" in the August edition of UPDATE sent me to my bookshelves to pull out the weighty tome of "The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women". It is a well-known fact that women have had a hard struggle to prove their merits and to make their ways in a male-dominated world. Literature is just another example. I re-read several of the earliest biographies and entries, starting with Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe, both of the 14th Century, who wrote because they felt a compulsion to put down feelings, thoughts and experiences on paper.

Then I came to a little-known name from the mid 18th Century. Phillis Wheatley developed her poetic talent against overwhelming odds, and deserves much credit and admiration. Time and place of her birth are as unknown as her African name, for she was purchased right off a slave ship in Boston when she was probably about seven years old. She became a personal servant to Mrs. Susannah Wheatley, wife of a wealthy Boston tailor. She was treated exceptionally well, for noting her aptitudes in easily grasping things, Mrs Wheatley took an especial interest in her. She learned English in sixteen months, and soon studied Latin, the Bible and English Poetry. She began writing Religious Verse when she was thirteen, and must have been seventeen when her first poem was published. This was an elegy on the death of an English evangelical preacher, George Whitehead.

In 1773, suffering poor health, she was sent to England with the Wheatley's son, and it was there that her only book, "Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral", was published. Soon after returning to Boston her benefactors died, but she found that they had made her a freed woman.

She was known for her wit in conversation, and her modesty, yet her poems are decorous and pious in style and wordage, as I think you will agree when you read this hauntingly, beautiful poem:

On being brought from Africa to America

T'was mercy brought me from my pagan
land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there's a God, that there's a Saviour
too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor
knew.
Some view that sable race with scornful
eye.
"Their colour is a diabolical dye".
Remember, Christians, Negroes black as
Cain
May be refined and join the angelic strain.

Unfortunately, she was not to enjoy her freedom for long. Troubles and hardship dogged her life as a freed woman. Phillis Wheatley died around 1784 at around 31 years of age. What other treasures might have come from her pen had she lived, no one will ever know!

By **Helen E. Glover**

Free Speech Endangered

Bill C-250 is expected to be voted on at its third and final reading soon after Parliament resumes (Sept 15.) and may well have been debated and voted on by the time you read this.

If passed, Bill C-250 would add "sexual orientation" to the list of groups protected from so-called "hate crime". As everyone knows, it's already illegal to advocate or

commit violence against gays (or any other group in Canada) so why this law? Bill C-250 would have the effect of silencing public debate on a very important public policy issue - it would gag debate by threatening to punish anyone who talks or writes about the very real negative aspects of homosexual activities.

Could certain Bible verses be considered as 'hate literature'? Yes! The Kangaroo Courts of the Human Rights Commissions have already ruled on that. In a case brought in Saskatoon, a paid advertisement in the Star Phoenix simply showed chapter and verses of two passages of Scripture which opposed the homosexual life-style. They didn't quote the actual words of scripture - just where they could be found.

Both the man who placed the ad and the paper which accepted it were fined \$5,000 each. No 'hate' was either expressed or indicated. If you were looking for hate I suggest you took at the legislation which activated the court. The hate clearly zeroed in on the beliefs held by Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

How's that for chilling freedom of expression? Make no mistake; if Bill C-250 passes, the claims made by its supporters that the Churches will not be affected will be worth the full trust in Prime Minister Chretien's long history of holding himself accountable for his promises.

It is a blatant attack on freedom of speech. Please note - I have studiously avoided making any comments on homosexual beliefs or expression or 'life-styles'. My objection is strictly about the appallingly chilling effect this Bill will have on freedom of expression. There are quite adequate laws already in place against slander, so what's the motivation behind Bill C-250?

Consider what would happen if "alcohol dependence" were added to the list of identifiable groups to be protected against 'hate crime'. Would it then be

illegal to warn young people about substance abuse? The point is that we are in danger of diluting our hate crime laws to the point where freedom of speech will be a thing of the past.

Would it become illegal to warn students - your children and grandchildren - about the health and safety issues linked to the gay sexual orientation? In public? yes - the new "thought police" would be on your case right smartly.

If you think I am over reacting I suggest you read (or re-read) George Orwell's blockbuster "1984" (which he wrote in 1948) in which "Big Brother" controlled even history, by means of "The Ministry of Truth" - one of whose divisions was the re-writing of past history. Its bureaucrats disposed of all previous truths upon which society had governed itself, by dropping all written expressions of it "down the memory hole." Then history was re-written to fit Big Brother's ideology. Another book I highly recommend is "Fahrenheit 451".

Joseph Goebells must be giggling in his grave!

By **The Right Reverend Robert C. Crawley, SSC - The Assistance Bishop - The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada** - this article appeared in *The Ladysmith and Chemainus Chronicle* (British Columbia) - Bishop Crawley writes a weekly column.

BAPTISTS: No sympathy here

McMINNVILLE, Ore. - One of the definitions *The American Heritage Dictionary* assigns to the word sympathy is "a feeling or an expression of pity or sorrow for the distress of another; compassion or commiseration." Based on this description, I have no sympathy for the Episcopalians whining over their denomination's election of a homosexual to the office of bishop - not the slightest bit.

I have to ask, "Were they really surprised?" For several years, the

Episcopal Church has allowed for the ordination of homosexuals as well as the blessing of same-sex unions. V. Gene Robinson, the man at the center of the most recent denominational disagreement, has served as an openly gay minister since at least 1989. He is not alone. There are many others.

Given the Episcopal toleration of homosexuality, it was only a matter of time until the appointment of an openly gay bishop. It was simply the next logical step in Episcopalian theological/sociological evolution. Even the dullest of Episcopal conservatives had to have seen it coming.

While *USA Today* reported that some delegates "stormed out" of the meeting and called Robinson's confirmation "a grave turn down the wrong road," *The Washington Post* put things in perspective and indicated that of those protesting the appointment of the homosexual bishop, "none said they are leaving the church."

The reason for my lack of sympathy lies in the fact that the Episcopal conservatives seem to do nothing more than whine. Just how much heresy are these so-called conservative delegates going to endure before they set sail in a new direction? How liberal is too liberal for them?

When the Episcopal Church began to allow for the ordination of homosexuals; I am sure many of these same conservatives, now upset over the appointment of a gay bishop; stormed out of meetings and read statements of dissent. However, they stayed loyal to the denomination.

When the Episcopal Church began to allow for the blessing of same-sex unions, I am certain that those who are now fuming over the confirmation of Robinson made their disapproval known. However, to this day they remain in a denomination that, in their words, "has left the historic faith and fractured the Anglican Communion."

The Washington Post reported "about 30

deputies stood behind" the Rev. Kendall Harmon as he "read a vociferous protest." The address appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Anglican Communion's spiritual leader to intervene concerning Robinson's appointment. It also included a pledge to a faithful and loving effort toward restoration of the Anglican Communion.

The Episcopal conservatives remind me of a spouse who tolerates adultery. He or she may yell and scream at the offending partner and might even complain to the neighbors. However, so long as he or she continues to live with the adulterer, no one is going to take serious the protestations. Not the neighbors and certainly not the unfaithful spouse.

As I have observed the current drama in the Episcopal Church, I have asked myself, "What would I do if my denomination - the Southern Baptist Convention - ever affirmed homosexuality in any shape, form or fashion?" While I doubt it is likely to occur in my lifetime, if it did, I would protest loudly, very loudly. I would then shake the dust off my feet and take my leave.

My loyalty is foremost and only to Jesus Christ and not to a denomination. It was He who died on the cross for my salvation, not a national religious body. No matter in what direction or with what velocity the politically correct winds of culture blow, the Word of God remains fixed and immovable. Jesus Christ is not a weather vane; He is an anchor.

"Stand with anybody that stands right. Stand with him while he is right and part with him when he goes wrong," declared Abraham Lincoln. Sounds like advice the conservative Episcopalians should heed.

By **The Reverend Kelly Boggs** - Boggs' column appears weekly in the Baptist Press. He is pastor of Valley Baptist Church in McMinnville, Ore.

'Tis the time's plague when madmen lead the blind

One of the more poignant scenes in Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear* is the gouging out of the eyes of the faithful but befuddled Gloucester in Act III. This mutilation cannot but occur as the old man refuses to see the unimpeachable loyalty of his legitimate son Edgar and the scheming machinations of his bastard son Edmund. As Gloucester smells his way to Dover 'he learns too late that there is no man so blind as he who refuses to see'.

It has been said that numbers do not lie. Try these numbers on for size. In Year of Our Lord 2001 the Episcopal Church reported average Sunday attendance at 853,000. Do not bother doing the math. In a nation of 280 million people that works out to less than one-third of one percent of the population. Accompanying this troubling statistic from the national church came this admonition (with strained aplomb): 'There is tremendous opportunity for the Episcopal Church beyond one-third of one percent.' I should think so. And then there is this statistic. The average age of an Episcopalian is 57.9, while the average age of the general United States population is 36.4.

What is interesting (and indeed, would be humorous if not so pathetic) to watch is how the corporate, institutional structures of the Church, and those who head them, continue carrying on as if little had changed since the nineteenth century. What is plain to everyone else, including the little old lady sitting in an increasingly empty sanctuary, is apparently not so to her revisionist rector, her ever-smiling but hopelessly heterodox diocesan bishop, or the chairperson of the Standing Liturgical Commission.

This delusion is not naive ignorance but willful blindness. For while attendance and giving decline, ministries end for lack of interest, and parish churches are sold off and turned into bars and libraries, the 'movers and shakers' at 815 Second Avenue, New York, New York continue

obfuscating, centralizing their political power, homogenizing the Faith, busying themselves in frenetic but finally meaningless activities, and persecuting dissenters.

How did we get here from there? The question is one I hear quite regularly from confused parishioners. The Episcopal Church in the United States is the closest thing this country has ever had to a state church, and it once boasted a membership which included America's presidents, congressman and senators, academics and poets. Today, the Episcopal Church is a by-word to unchurched Americans, and is a scandal to genuine believers in other churches. As any historian will tell you, causation is always complex, but it seems to me that there are three clear and certain reasons for the decline (and coming demise) of the Episcopal Church.

Firstly, one must acknowledge the subversion and capitulation of the seminaries. Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has the dubious honour of a lesbian priest and a witch on the tenured faculty, as well as of awarding a Master of Divinity degree without a single Scripture course (but with classes in gay and environmental theology, of course). EDS is the most notorious example, but all the rest - perhaps excluding two, one Anglo-Catholic and the other Evangelical - are in varying degrees of heterodoxy just behind it.

Christianity is a religion founded and dependent upon an unchanging deposit of divine revelation. This revelation is found primarily in a book, the Holy Bible, and secondarily on the councils of the Church which exegeted and synthesized the teachings of that book. Any particular branch of the Christian Church which begins to call the source, integrity, and authority of its founding charter into question, trains its priests to do so, and instructs those same priests to teach the faithful in the pews to do so, is doomed.

Secondly, one must blame the

institutionalizing of the hermeneutic of liberation. This process began in the turbulent 1960s with clergy co-opting the activism of the youth culture and its opposition to America's involvement in the Vietnam War. Now, it is impossible to have any discussion with the libs without some reference to liberating an oppressed minority. The revisionist gospel is as boring as plainsong [eh? GF], forever on one note (Gender justice! Sexual justice! Economic justice! Social justice!).

It is also an exclusively imminent gospel. There is no concept of redemption, heaven or of a transcendent deity. Everything is about the here and now, and the Church's mission, as they see it, is to enfranchise the poor, euthanize the elderly, abort the unborn, liberate the homosexual and save the whales. This activist hermeneutic has truly been institutionalized and is the lens through which theology, Scripture, ordination, sacraments, mission and even evangelism is viewed.

Finally, we must cite the disregard for history. Did you know that during the American Revolution Anglican clergy in the colonies, almost all loyalists, feared for their lives for merely holding services and praying for the king? The Reverend Jonathan Boucher kept two cocked pistols on his prayer desk to defend himself. The Reverend John Beach said he 'would pray and preach for the King till the rebels cut out his tongue', and he persevered in doing so even after being shot at. Most American Episcopalians do not have a clue about the above. And sadly, our ecclesiastical amnesia goes much deeper.

Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, John Jewel, Matthew Parker - all were men marinated in Holy Scripture and masters of Patristics. Indeed, the motivation behind the sixteenth-century English Reformation was to return the Church Catholic to a purity of piety and practice consistent with Holy Scripture and the Primitive Church. Until recently, a thorough course in Patristics was considered essential to the training of men for the ministry in England. Such was never the case in

America, and those chickens are now coming home to roost.

A loss of memory is tantamount in an individual to a loss of identity. The Episcopal Church has no corporate memory before the illegal ordination of the eleven women in Philadelphia in 1976. Consequently, it can thumb its nose at Lambeth, the Church of England, antiquity, apostolic practice, and even the experiences of so-called Third World Anglicans just a generation ago, as being irrelevant. This amnesia has resulted in the Church becoming just another loony sect in a nation of loony sects.

What is next? As this issue of *New Directions* goes to print, the Episcopal Church will be meeting in General Convention in Minneapolis. According to the Canons, the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies must both give consent, by simple majority, to the election of the openly homosexual priest Gene Robinson before his consecration as the next bishop of New Hampshire. Barring a miracle, he will receive that consent. This action will merely make *de jure* what is already *de facto*, and will be the penultimate victory for the pansexualists. Their ultimate victory will be the systematic elimination of those who oppose them.

As Gloucester concluded, so it is with us, 'I have no way, and therefore want no eyes; I stumbled when I saw.'

By **The Reverend Quinton Morrow** - Rector of St. Andrew's Church in the Diocese of Fort Worth. This article appeared in the August issue of *New Directions* as the *Letter from America*.

Pervasive, false, and debilitating

In 1975, eighteen prominent thinkers identified 13 "*pervasive, false, and debilitating*" themes in contemporary Christian thought . . . and called for a religious renewal in America.

The 13 themes representing *the final capitulation by the Church to modern thought* are:

1. Modern thought is superior to all past forms of understanding reality, and is therefore normative for Christian faith and life.
2. Religious statements are totally independent of reasonable discourse.
3. Religious language refers to human experience and nothing else, God being humanity's noblest creation.
4. Jesus can only be understood in terms of contemporary models of humanity.
5. All religions are equally valid, the choice among them is not a matter of conviction about truth but only of personal preference or life style.
6. To realize one's potential and to be true to oneself is the whole meaning of life.
7. Since what is human is good, evil can adequately be understood as failure to realize potential.
8. The sole purpose of worship is to promote individual self-realization and human community.
9. Institutions and historical traditions are oppressive and inimical to our being truly human; liberation from them is required for authentic existence and authentic religion.
10. The world must set the agenda for the Church. Social, political, and economic programs to improve the quality of life are ultimately normative for the Church's mission in the world.
11. An emphasis on God's transcendence is at least a hindrance to, and perhaps incompatible with, Christian social concern and action.
12. The struggle for a better humanity will bring about the Kingdom of God.
13. The question of hope beyond death is irrelevant or at best marginal to the Christian understanding of human fulfillment.

Thanks to **David Kivell** (The 18 were: Peter L. Berger, Elizabeth Ann Bettenhausen, William Sloan Coffin, Avery Dulles, Neal Fisher, George Forell, James N. Gettemy, Stanley Hauserwas, Thomas Hopko, George Lindbeck, Illeana Marculescu, Ralph McInerny, E. Kilmer Myers, Richard J. Mouw, Richard John

Neuhaus, Randolph W Nugent, Carl J. Peter, Alexander Schmemmann, Gerard Sloyan, Lewis B. Smedes, George H. Tavad, Bruce Vawter, John D. Weaver, and Robert Wilken.)

The bondage of the will

What we often fail to take into account in our explaining of why people hold on to what they know to be wrong beliefs or bad habits is what used to be called "the bondage of the will".

We are all familiar with the inability of people to give up smoking or hard drugs or alcohol, even when they really want to do so. They seem permanently wedded to the drug and are its slaves even at the same time as they can tell you how bad it is for them and that they ought to give it up.

Likewise we are familiar with the apparent inability of people to give up bad habits that they know are wrong and their desperate desire to change - e.g., gambling, compulsive sex, excessive eating, gossiping, bad temper, over-use of credit cards, and so on.

In some cases it is possible that the cause of the bondage to drugs and compulsions can be traced to chemical reactions in the blood and the brain and thus special medical help along with spiritual medicine are needed.

However, there are many cases - most cases - where the reason that we do not act according to our informed consciences, best reasoning and rational mind is what we have called "the bondage of the will". St Paul has something profound to say about this in Romans 7. St Augustine has described the condition in detail in his writings and in his autobiography. We can experience the inner voice saying, "I ought to be this or that" or "I ought to do this or that", and we can be persuaded that what should be achieved or done by us is wholly right, and still we can fail to go ahead. The commitment of the mind does not get into the will and into action. Indeed, we can feel paralyzed and unable to do what we

know absolutely is right. There is a blockage in the will. Thus we do not have the peace that passes understanding in our souls.

When we are in such circumstances it is obvious that we need to give ourselves fresh commitment to prayer asking for help from above and claiming the promises that those who call upon the Lord for help will be heard. It may be necessary also to talk to a godly friend to ask for help and prayer from him.

This bondage of the will is also often found in respectable people (Christian leaders for example) - a kind of stubbornness and refusal to accept that we are wrong, or that we must go in a different direction, or that we have to adopt a different creed. When it is to our (worldly) advantage to stay with this or that way, this or that form, our wills can and do become exceedingly defensive to protect the ego and the advantage to self, and this is so even when we are convinced in our minds that we should actually change our way or form or behavior to obey the Lord.

And this moral and spiritual bondage where people are socially joined - in an ethnic neighborhood, or in a local church, or in a denomination - can take on a corporate dimension so that there it is as if a group of people are glued together in a bondage of the will, not prepared to change even when they know in their minds and hearts that they ought to do so for the lasting good of their group and in love of their neighbor. In fact this protection of the status quo and the refusal to be led by enlightened conscience is a major expression of sinfulness in churches and Christian societies for it produces both sins of commission and sins of omission.

Further, this bondage can affect the best of us (that is, the most religious of us) as our Lord's descriptions of and words to the Pharisees and Scribes well illustrate. In their case there was a corporate bondage within their party/movement and there was an individual bondage in each

soul and it was all totally abhorrent to the Lord Jesus.

Let us relate this to where we are in the ECUSA now.

What I fear will prevent any God-directed renewal and reformation within conservative Episcopalianism at this period of crisis in the Episcopal Church in the Fall of 2003 is "the bondage of the will", both in its personal and in its corporate aspects. Too many of us seemingly want to hold on to what we have believed to be fine in the last decade or more, even though now we hear the informed reason telling us that it was below par and not genuinely of the Anglican Way, and even though we feel the alert conscience saying loudly and clearly within, "I ought to change and embrace the right way, this is my clear duty."

We shall never escape some bondage of the will as long as we live in mortal bodies, but let us seek by the mercies of God to break as free as is possible from that bondage now, individually and corporately, so that we do experience that gift of the Holy Spirit which is freedom from the rule of original and actual sin.

By **The Reverend Doctor Peter Toon**

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Enclosures:

The Diocesan Circular

The Annunciator
The Augustinian

The Traditional Anglican