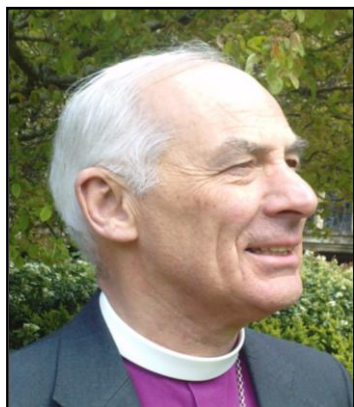




Lenten Newsletter 2015

*Retired
Clergy
Association*



From the Chairman, David Jennings

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This edition of our Newsletter comes to you as we approach Holy

Week and Eastertide. How much we all need to hear the message that comes to us at this time - sin is forgiven, evil is conquered and death is not the end! What a privilege it is for each of us in our own way and according to our situation to live and proclaim this message, which gives real hope because of the death and Resurrection of Jesus.

Sometimes I am asked 'What does the RCA do?' Well, here is a practical example of what your Council through its Officers has been up to.

Over the past two years we have been in discussion with the Officers of the Pensions Board as they were preparing to revise the CHARM Housing Rental Scheme. One of the points that the Council made even before the discussions began was the intrusiveness of the Pensions Board requiring to see Bank statements of the tenant and their spouse each year.

The new scheme, which was introduced at the General Synod in York last summer and will be implemented from

April 1st 2015, has abolished the need for the inspection of statements with the introduction of Target Rents. But there was a problem for a number of people who would now be paying well over their target rent, and bringing their rent down to that point would in some cases have taken very many years.

On January 6th Alan Wolstencroft, Malcolm Grundy and I met with the Chair of the Pensions Board, the General Secretary of the General Synod and the Secretary of the Church Commissioners. I am delighted to report that for a small number of people who were paying well over their Target Rent, that following a review, they will now be paying no more than a Market Rent from April 1st. The whole scheme will be subject to annual review and the Council will be keeping a close eye on this and on other consequences of the introduction of the new scheme.

So if anyone asks you what the RCA is up to - here is a good example of what we seek to do on your behalf!

Every blessing for the season.

+David

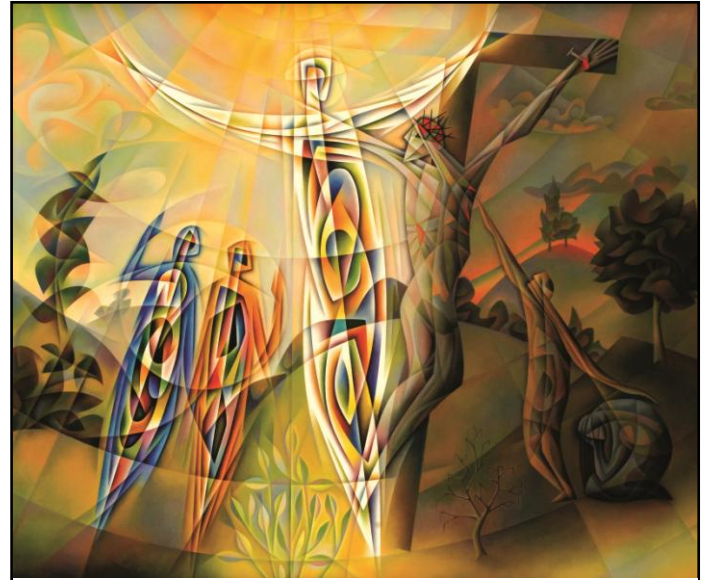
The Power of Forgiveness, Grace and Love

Holy Week and Easter present one of the most dramatic powerful expressions of sacrificial love and redemptive power; terms that perhaps are readily understandable, to some extent, by those who have been brought up, or have come to some basic understanding of the Christian faith. But what of those for whom this language and mindset are somewhat alien?

To them I recommend a visit to the theatre, cinema or DVD to see the much acclaimed *Les Misérables*, for this might help unravel some of the profound qualities of love, hate, forgiveness, redemption and grace that we in the Christian Churches will witness once again from Palm Sunday to Easter Day.

The story has much to teach us and enlighten us about Christian virtues. The principal character, Jean Valjean, a convict on parole, is pardoned by a bishop from whom he has stolen silver. This unwarranted act of compassion utterly transforms him from a criminal filled with hate to a sacrificial hero. Valjean is contrasted with the narrow, judgemental, religious outlook of Javert, the police inspector who relentlessly pursues Valjean and is devoid of grace and forgiveness. He believes in a vengeful Old Testament God who will bring down plague and pestilence on all those who disobey the law.

The full range of human qualities are shown in the characters in the story from the disbelieving humour of the swindling innkeeper and his wife, and the loss of faith through life's brutalities that destroys the heroine's whole idea of loving; something she expresses in one of the hits of the show, *I Dreamed a Dream*.



John Reilly - Crucifixion

The spiritual and theological content of the film, its music, its drama, its prayers (*Bring him home, The Lord's Prayer*), its insights into human nature and behaviour, have resonances with the drama of Passiontide. I believe the film gives us the opportunity to help to unpack and explain something of the generous grace of God, something of the sacrificial nature of the death of Jesus on a Cross of shame, something of his forgiving compassion as in agony he pleads for the forgiveness of fallen humanity, something of the cost of loving, something of the hope that comes through acceptance of this redemptive love, something of resurrection and new life that is to be lived in the here and now.

The show and the film gave me, and I suspect most people who have seen them, a lot to think about. Holy Week and Easter present us with life-changing events, not only to think about, but to respond to.

As we share in the events of Passiontide, Holy Week and Easter in Church this year, let us not do so just as spectators or bystanders, but as those caught up in the unfolding drama of God's greatest act of grace and love.

Alan Wolstencroft

Alan is Retired Clergy and Widows Officer in Manchester Diocese and a member of the RCA Council

GRIBCHESTER CALLING

by John Nightingale

Afficionados of the Church Times may remember the occasional dispatches from the diocese of Gribchester where, as Garrison Keillor puts it, ‘all the women are strong, all the men are good looking, and all the children are above average.’ After a long lapse the present writer was surprised to get a letter from an old friend who had recently retired there, some lines of which it may be of interest to share.

‘I’d never been to Gribchester till I’d moved to be nearer my daughter. The place is not really on the way to anywhere else. I was lonely and she needed help with the children. I found a local church, not quite what I was used to but friendly enough; lots of things going on and quite well staffed, though the Vicar thought it might be good for me to get PTO so I could help at holiday time. Didn’t really meet the other clergy except at the occasional ecumenical event. No one invited me to Chapter and I didn’t want to appear a pushy woman.

‘Funnily enough I was contacted by the undertakers quite soon – one of the big chains – they must have heard what I did up north – but I had to give them the go slow, first because I was not widely known here but, more importantly, because in this diocese retired NSMs like me, could not retain any of the funeral fees, and, after my husband died, I needed the money to keep the car going. I thought with my teaching and counselling training there might be opportunities for ministry – I’d love to train as a spiritual director. But Church

House told me I had to see the Bishop and his diary was booked up.

‘Then I met Ron and his wife. We were all collecting for Christian Aid and he told me he had recently retired after a lifetime in the diocese. They were both feeling a bit flat. “Don’t get me wrong,” he said. “We got a wonderful send-off. Even the Archdeacon turned up. And the final interview with the Bishop; he really had done his homework – he remembered the names of the churchwardens, and asked for a low-down on the parish power dynamics. But then silence! Six months passed – very nice too; got the house and garden in order. But then I was kicking my heels and she got fed up with me under her feet all day. Even my successor was stand-offish. And I didn’t want to interfere.”

“One thing puzzled me,” I said. “I got this letter from the Pensions Board the other day, mentioning some new Guidelines and saying we could get details from our Retirement Officer. Who on earth is that?” “Oh, that’s Bill,” said Ron. “Heard about him the other day. The gossip is that the Bishop had to cover his back. But Bill’s OK. We could talk to him.” And so we did.

‘Bill was a bit bemused. He had met the Bishop at an induction and hadn’t liked to say “No.” He was sure something needed to be done but no one had given him a job description. And he had a particular concern for ministry in his



patch of the diocese where a number of parishes were without functioning incumbents. Maybe he should talk to the Archdeacon. And that's how Sheila came in. Before ordination she had been a Deputy Head, the one who made up the timetables. It proved a useful skill. She got together a list of parish needs and matched it with resources.

'The Rural Deans were wary at first for fear of a power-grab from the centre but the Bishop assured them that the roots were the branches. The Training Officer got wind of what was happening and saw a chance of expanding his work – and his budget. So now every new retiree gets contacted by Bill not long after retirement – to find out how they are, what sort of ministry (if any) they might like to offer

and whether they would like or need any special training. I'm now doing the course in spiritual direction; and I have as many funerals as I can manage – with 80% of the fees, now that the Diocesan Secretary has read the Synod recommendation. And we all go on a GROW – Gribchester Retirement Opportunities Workshop.

'When Margaret Duggan featured GROW in the Church Times, the Bishop was asked for a comment. "Yes," he said, "it has been an integral part of my five-year plan. To adapt the well-known words of Pliny; *ex Gribcastro semper aliquid novi.*"

Well, if the Lord can speak to Balaam through the jawbone of an ass....

John Nightingale is Retired Clergy Officer in the Archdeaconry of Birmingham. Before retirement in 2007 he was Incumbent of Rowley Regis, St Giles, and Warden of Readers in Birmingham Diocese. He worked in Nigeria with Church Mission Society from 1970-76. He is a member of the RCA Council, representing the Dioceses of Birmingham, Hereford, Lichfield and Worcester.

John's witty and wry contribution above is particularly relevant. On 1 January 2013 former parochial fees became the legal property of the Diocesan Board of Finance, with a recommendation that 80% of these fees should be returned to retired clergy and others when they preside at funerals and weddings. We reported on these changes in our Christmas 2012 Newsletter, and have been trying to monitor the way they have been implemented ever since. We are particularly concerned at the way the 80% recommendation is honoured more in the breach than in the observance, with many dioceses paying less than this. We also wonder about the way retired clergy receive their fees, particularly when they take funerals at crematoria.

In January, the Legal Office of the National Church Institutions issued a document of vital importance to all retired clergy who conduct funerals in crematoria, and to any who might be tempted to conduct funerals on a 'freelance' basis. With permission from Church House, we reproduce the document below. An important corollary of the document is that none of us can minister legally without PTO, because this is how we receive and enjoy DBS clearance.

Please let us have feedback on any of the issues raised in John's article and in the Legal Document. Write to david@phypers.co.uk.

Crematorium funerals and parochial fees

1. The Legal Office has been asked to clarify the legal position in relation to crematorium funerals and the payment to, and receipt of fees by, the clergy. In particular we have been asked to advise on the position of clergy who do not hold office (whether because they are retired or otherwise) and who purport to conduct funerals on a freelance basis.
2. The legislation relating to parochial fees was recently revised and updated by the Ecclesiastical Fees (Amendment) Measure 2011 which made extensive amendments to the Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986. Incumbents fees have been abolished with effect from 1st January 2013¹ and the legal basis on which fees become payable, and to whom, has been put beyond doubt.
3. Parochial fees automatically arise and are payable when any of the duties listed in Schedule A1 to the 1986 Measure are carried out by a clerk in holy orders.² Those duties include officiating at a funeral at a crematorium.
4. The parochial fees are payable to the diocesan board of finance and to the parochial church council.³ The amount of the fees payable to each of these two bodies is prescribed in the current Parochial Fees Order.⁴
5. The effect of the legislation is that the fees prescribed in the current Parochial Fees Order are payable to the diocesan board of finance and the relevant parochial church council whenever a clerk in holy orders of the Church of England officiates at a funeral service at a crematorium. That is so irrespective of whether the clerk in holy orders is beneficed, licensed or holds permission to officiate. The statutory provisions apply simply by virtue of the service in question being performed by a person who is a clerk in holy orders.
6. Unless the diocesan board of finance has expressly agreed that retired or other clergy who undertake occasional duties may keep the fee that is payable to the board (or part of the fee), it is not lawful for a member of the clergy to retain any fee which is payable to the diocesan board of finance under the 1986 Measure. To do so in the absence of an agreement with the board would amount to the appropriation of property belonging to another for the purposes of the Theft Act 1968.
7. It is not legally open to the clergy of the Church of England to operate on what amounts to a 'freelance' basis. The 1986 Measure - like all Measures - is not merely an internal church rule; it has the same force and effect as an Act of Parliament⁵ Its provisions are part of the law of the land and compliance with them is not optional or voluntary.
8. Moreover, all clerks in holy orders are, by virtue of that legal status, bound by the Canons of the Church of England (which also form part of the law of the land). Canon B 1.2 limits the forms of service that may be used by the clergy to those which are authorised or allowed by Canon. Canon C 8 provides that clergy may officiate in any place only if they have the authority of the bishop of the diocese to do so.⁶ Additionally, it is unlawful for a member of the clergy to officiate in any parish without the permission of the incumbent⁷ except where authorised to do so under specific statutory provisions.⁸
9. There is therefore no legal scope for the exercise of an independent or freelance ministry by any clergy of the Church of England. An Anglican clergyman/woman cannot lawfully claim to be taking a funeral in a private, unofficial capacity, and accept payment for his or her services on that basis, rather than as a clerk in holy orders.
10. The only way in which a clerk in holy orders can render him- or herself free from the provisions of the 1986 Measure, and of the obligations imposed by the Canons, is by executing and enrolling a deed of relinquishment in accordance with the provisions of the Clerical Disabilities Act 1870. Only where a deed is executed and enrolled under that Act and subsequently recorded by the bishop is the person concerned freed from the legal constraints and obligations that apply to clerks in holy orders.

The Legal Office of the National Church Institutions, Church House, Westminster

January 2015

¹ This is subject to transitional provisions under which an incumbent who was in office on 1st July 2011 and who had not assigned his or her fees to the diocesan board of finance could give notice to the Bishop by 31st December 2011 stating that he or she wished to preserve his or her entitlement to parochial fees. An incumbent who gave such notice is entitled to retain his or her entitlement to parochial fees for so long as he or she remains in office. Or by a licensed deaconess, reader or lay worker.

³ See section 1 of the 1986 Measure.

⁴ Currently, the Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2014 (S.1.2014/813).

⁵ By virtue of section 4 of the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919.

⁶ This is subject to an exception (not material here) which permits an incumbent to invite another member of the clergy to officiate in his or her church on a limited occasional basis.

⁷ *Nesbitt v Wallace* [1901] P 354.

⁸ See the Extra-Parochial Ministry Measure 1967 (which is concerned with chaplains licensed to institutions) and section 2 of the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 1992 (which permits an incumbent to officiate at the funeral of his or her parishioner at a cemetery or crematorium situated in another parish without the consent of the incumbent of the other parish).

Ministry in 'Retirement'

Since David Brown 'retired' as an Incumbent in Blackburn Diocese in 2014, he and Hanna, his wife, have made their home in Warsaw, where David ministers as Priest-in-Charge to the Anglican community there. David writes:



'As you can imagine, there is no comparison between being a Chaplain in Warsaw and parish life in Scorton, Calder Vale and Barnacre. Each is wonderful in its unique way.

'Warsaw is a great place to live. The transport is brilliant and, because I'm so old, I can go free on the trams, buses and trains. It's like being a child again. There are so many parks; apparently more parks than in any other major European city. The music is incredible. Last Sunday I was at the ballet and last evening at the opera, both at the Warsaw National Opera which has the largest stage of any opera house in Europe. There is a real sense of vitality with so many young people.



'Of course, Warsaw is a tragic city and one often meets people who lost loved ones in World War II, at the end of which Warsaw had been razed to the ground. Also there are a lot of reminders of the 45 years of communism with grey buildings and enormous bureaucracy.

'BUT it is starting to get cold. I have a lovely two bedroom flat near the centre of the city.

'The church is right in the Old Town and is a Catholic chapel, small and beautiful. Like all churches it has wonderful people. It is different to England in the diversity it offers. For example, last Sunday in the congregation were people from Poland, England, America, Nigeria, Uganda, Holland, Belarus, Ukraine and Italy.

'So there are lots of challenges and many opportunities. It will be wonderful when Hanna is here. She has to continue working in Garstang until the end of March. I miss her very much.'

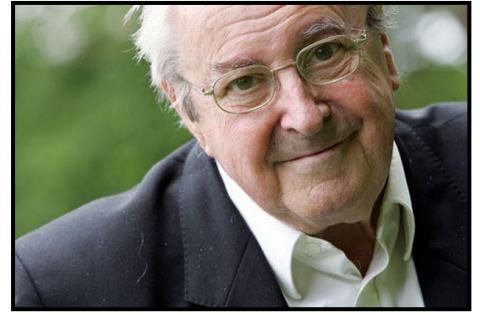
To learn more of David's ministry, visit www.anglicanchurch.pl.

How is God using you in 'retirement'? Let us know, with pictures, if possible.



Francis Wood – 1928-2015

Soon after I became RCA Secretary and Treasurer, Bishop Richard Lewis, Chairman at the time, asked me to produce the next Newsletter. 'I'll send you some pieces by Francis Wood,' he said. 'He's a writer!'



Later, I met Francis at our General Meeting at Bishopthorpe, and was immediately attracted by his dry humour and impish smile. Always a regular at the York gatherings, Francis unashamedly came for the food and a chat over lunch with the Archbishop. On one never-to-be-forgotten occasion, he got Archbishop John talking about his controversial articles in the then newly-published *Sun on Sunday*, how he'd only agreed to write them on condition there would no Page 3 girls in the paper, how he'd extracted a promise from the Editor to publish prominent apologies if they printed errors in their stories, and how his articles had been so well received by groups of people (often men) who never normally heard the Christian message of God's love and forgiveness. Those of us close enough at the table to hear all this were so captivated by the Archbishop's story that we persuaded him to scrap his prepared after-lunch address (he issued his notes instead) and tell the whole company about his foray into tabloid journalism.

Again and again, when preparing issues of this Newsletter I would find one of Francis' pieces just right for that particular edition. How sad I was, then, earlier this year, to learn from Colin Gough, Newcastle Diocesan Retirement Officer, that Francis had passed away quite suddenly and unexpectedly! Although I'd only known Francis for a relatively short time, and then fleetingly, I immediately felt a keen sense of loss. No more meetings at Bishopthorpe will enjoy his infectious fun. Nor will any more editions of this Letter benefit from his sideways looks at issues of life and faith.

Francis was an example to us all, a man who heard God's call early in life and responded in obedience. And in 'retirement' Francis heard a new call to minister through his pen, not just to Christians, but across the north-east of England through his weekly column, *Church Matters*, in the Newcastle *Chronicle*. In tribute to Francis we re-publish one of his last pieces, *Writing for God*, a stirring call to us all to continue to serve our Lord and Master while life and strength last. He was so insistent I should include this. Did he know it would be his final contribution?

Francis is survived by his sister Angela and nephew Michael, to whom we send our sincere condolences.

May he rest in peace and rise in Glory.

WRITING FOR GOD by Francis Wood

Once they called Theology the Queen of Sciences. It was for everyone, 'not only,' as John Betjeman would say, 'for the shining ones who dwell, safe in the Dorchester Hotel.' Today it appears that theologians are happy keeping God to themselves. A recent survey of books in Australia revealed that the most difficult books to read were those on theology. Have Church writers lost confidence in their subject? Have they forgotten how to communicate anything useful about God or is that just too difficult? It's no wonder Alistair Campbell said of Downing Street, 'We don't do God here.'

When Sammy Kahn wrote the song *Three Coins in a Fountain* he was asked, 'When you write, Sammy, what comes first, the words or the music?' He replied, 'First comes the telephone call!'

It was the same for me. In 1993 came a call from an editor after I gave a talk on local radio about Sailing. The editor of the *Chronicle* said, 'I heard your talk. Do you think you could write us a weekly column?' I said, 'What could I write about?' 'I don't mind what you write about. All that matters to me is, will the readers read it? I'll pay the usual freelance fee. I like your style.' Twenty years on, I still write *Church Matters* in the *Chronicle*, every Friday page 15, having survived five editors!

When a vicar retires, does his Vocation stop? Or do new vocations open up now we've got the time? Friends suggest how we might spend our time. Gardening? Bowling? One thing leads to another. If you feel a vocation to write, how do you go about it? Get a copy of the *Artists and Writers Yearbook*. It'll tell you how to write a letter to an editor offering a piece (everything's a 'piece') in which he may be interested. It lists all publications which accept

unsolicited scripts and in some cases how much they pay for lineage. Best is to get to know an editor and offer him a drink. Failing that, write something that you know about for your own amusement. Something which interests you may interest someone else. Ideas come when we least expect them.

Every writer should carry a *Common Place Book*. It could be the spare pages at the back of your diary. Jot down every idea which comes. Remember what interests readers are the unusual and the controversial. If all the lamp-posts in Acorn Road are standing upright, there's no story. But if one falls over and holds up the traffic and lands on a pram and blows the electric fuses, that's a story.

What an opportunity! After 50 years of ministry, surely there are some retired clergy capable of putting their fingers to work on the computer in the service of God? Your Church needs you, brothers and sisters.

You'll need a fund of stories. And you may be surprised. When our vicar, Peter Ramsden announced in Church that he was to be the next Bishop of Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea, I called up a local reporter. 'Our Vicar is to be the Bishop of Port Moresby,' I announced. 'Oh my!' said the reporter. That's a long way away. In South Wales isn't it?' 'No. That's Port Talbot,' I countered. 'Ah. Is it in the Hebrides?' 'No. You're thinking of Port Charlotte on the Isle of Islay.' 'Go on then, give me a clue.....' 'PNG,' I suggested. 'My goodness!' he said. 'What's Proctor and Gamble to do with it?'

Above all, enjoy writing. Make yourself laugh as you write. Remember, you're only as good as your next piece.

Retired Clergy Association

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SUMMER GENERAL MEETINGS, 2015

There is still time to register an interest in attending one or both of these meetings. Numbers are coming in well for Bishopthorpe, but, so far, the response for Bury St Edmunds is disappointing.

So, come on East Anglians! This will be a rare opportunity to attend a General Meeting of the Association without travelling miles. Bring your wives and husbands, and any other retired clergy you can interest in the event. You do not have to be an RCA member to come.

Bishop Robert, our new President, is looking forward to coming to his first RCA event. Bernadette Kenny and Loraine Miller, senior executives at the Pensions Board, will also be invited. The pattern for each day will be:

10 30 am	Gather for coffee
11 15 am	Eucharist
12 15 pm	Lunch (no charge but a freewill offering)
1 00 pm	Address by the bishop/archbishop
2 00 pm	General Meeting
3 00 pm	Depart

Thursday 11 June **St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds**
Come and meet Bishop Robert, our new President

Friday 26 June **Bishopthorpe Palace, York**
with the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu
The general meeting will be the Annual General Meeting

To register an interest in coming, write to david@phypers.co.uk.