

Dear Friends,

We are now entering Lent and the whole of this month is occupied with it. Every year Christians should observe Lent beginning with Ash Wednesday.

The great Anglican Benedictine Monk Dom Augustine Morris, Abbot of Nashdom wrote in his book *Straight Course to God*: "Lent, historical speaking, is not in origin a period of fasting and prayer in imitation of the forty days spent by our Lord in the desert, not yet primarily a period of penitence and self-discipline, but rather a time of preparation for the great feast of our redemption which terminates it. It is Easter Day which is the pivot on which the whole of this period of the Church's Year hinges: the forty days before it, which are a preparation for it: the forty days which follow it and are a prolongation of it. But even while we regard it in this way we need by no means leave on one side the thought of our Lord's forty days in the wilderness. On the contrary, those forty days were themselves a preparation, in which by prayer, fasting and the withstanding of temptations to abuse His Messiahship, Jesus made ready for His Ministry. So in our Lenten observance we may with full appropriateness associate our preparation for Easter by prayer and self-discipline with that period of retirement into the desert."

The Church calls us to examine ourselves in the light of Christ who is the only Saviour of the world. But how we do this is an individual choice, aided by prayer, and the teaching and Services of the Church. Beside some act of voluntary self-discipline, spend some extra time in prayer, adoring and worshipping God and interceding for others, especially praying for the conversion of the world and in particular every person living in Britain. Although we must respect those who genuinely believe in their non Christian Religions, yet it is our duty to pray lovingly for them that they may come to know that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour and worship God in His Triune Majesty. At the same time we must pray that we, with God's help, may grow in holiness and be living examples of Christ's love and service. We must also make a special effort to read one of the Gospels and so develop our spiritual life and our knowledge of our holy Faith.

Archbishop Cyril Garbett, of York, 1875-1955, who I had the honour of meeting in the Caribbean before I went to seminary, and who I greatly admired, wrote in his book *The Claims of the Church of England*, pub. 1947: "A Church to be Catholic must hold the Catholic Faith, treasure the Catholic Scriptures, administer the Catholic Sacraments, and retain the Catholic Ministry. The Church of England proclaims to all that it is Catholic. At no time has it ever lost these distinguishing marks of the Catholic Church." Sadly the last part of that statement is no longer true.

It is not popular nor a pleasant thing to say but we can no longer pretend that it is not happening. Both the Established Church and the State are in serious trouble. Although there are hundreds of good and devout Christians across the country, because of the lack of proper leadership, many folk are turning their back on God in Christ. The Established Church which always claimed to be both Catholic and Reformed is in many ways turning her back on the teachings of Christ and is fast becoming just another sect. Church buildings are being closed across the country and Mosques are being built.

The faithful remnant of traditional Anglicans and other Christians are being pressurised to conform to the world and deny the eternal truths taught by Christ. Individual Christians are even persecuted by dismissal from jobs because of their faith, sneered at, and lied about. Even today someone said in an interview in the news that it is time for 'white middleclass Christian teaching on morality' to be removed from education. The children must be taught that having married parents of a father and a mother is not the only normal family. Parents are also being told, and apparently will be issued with leaflets later this year, that they must teach their small children about sex but not about what is right or wrong.

Imagine my amazement to hear last Sunday night, 22nd February, in the Channel 4 Programme *Christianity: a history*, a Church of England Clergyman, dressed in all the full vestments for celebrating the Mass, saying that he did not believe that God made the universe; he did not believe in the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, His Resurrection, nor life after death. When questioned further he, who belongs to a movement called The Sea of Faith, said that he was not sure, but thought that perhaps Jesus was a real person. Had I thought that, as an honest person, I would have resigned my priesthood; and had I said that as a young priest in the West Indies, my Bishop would have instantly, and rightly, removed my license to function as a priest. No wonder the established Church and the country are in the present state. May God have mercy upon us.

We in The Traditional Anglican Church in Britain are determined, with Christ's help, to continue and proclaim the Faith of our forefathers. The true Faith of Jesus Christ. The first reading for Ash Wednesday is very much about the situation and the need to return to God: "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep and say 'Spare thy people, O Lord, and make not thy heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Awake Oh Christian people of our land, and repent before it is too late, and in loving service and a proper knowledge of God as taught by Christ's holy Church, return to Him and teach others about His wonderful forgiving love and the liberating Gospel of Eternal Life in Christ Jesus.

May this Lent be truly a very special one, and as we seek to grow in holiness may we walk together with Christ and rejoice in the celebration of the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and in Him our own.

Your Priest & Friend,

Fr. Brian.