

# NATAL ANGLICAN NEWS

A NEWSPAPER FOR THE DIOCESE OF NATAL  
IPEPHA LESIFUNDAMBISHOBI SASENATAL

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## Cathedral Anniversary

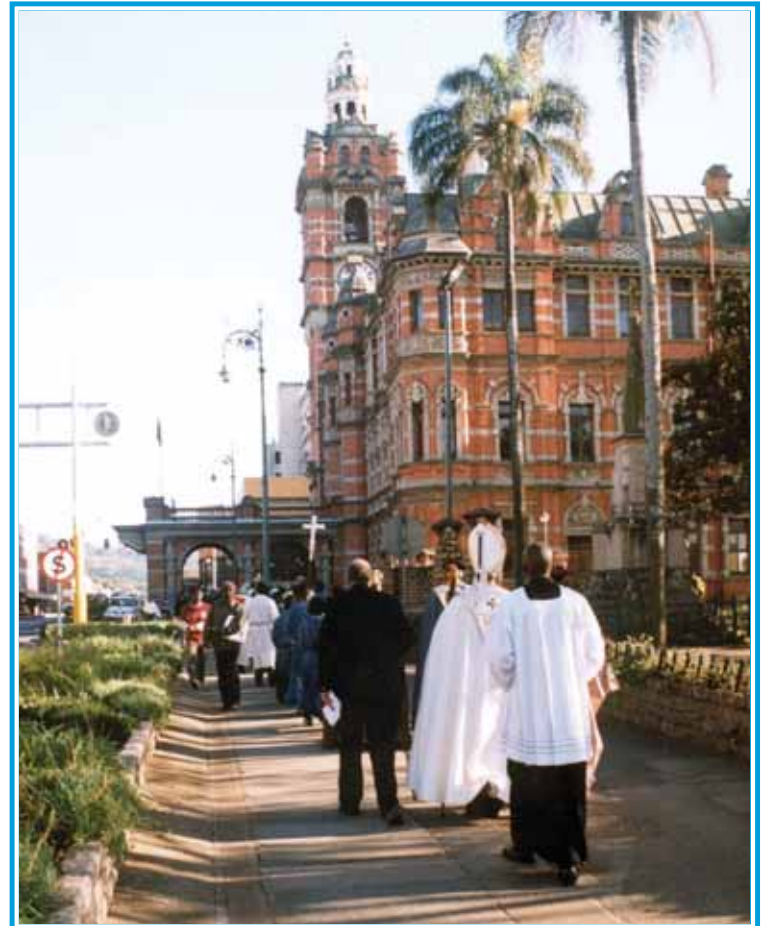
Over four hundred people joined in celebration on Pentecost Sunday to mark the 30th anniversary of the inauguration of the Cathedral of the Holy Nativity.

The ceremony began on the site of the St Saviour's Cathedral

read by Brenden Andrew and Nobuhle Kuzwayo. Members of the Pietermaritzburg Choral Society, led by Dr Joshua Radebe, sang an anthem and Bishop Rubin preached the sermon on the theme "The Past; The Present; The Future".

Two children, Omphile Anele Molefe and Tlotlathompho Olonathando Modiane Seretse were baptised by Bishop Rubin with Omphile expressing great unhappiness at being separated from her mom – Bishop Rubin suggested it was his "hat" that gave her cause to cry.

It is not often that mass is concelebrated by six priests, but this was a very special occasion. Fr Patrick Gumede, Fr Johnson Chinyong'ole, Dean Fred Pitout, Canon John Forbes, Associate Dean Nkosinathi Ndwandwe and Bishop Rubin Philip stood



Deans past and present compare notes in the street.

with Dean Fred Pitout and Canon John Forbes welcoming the worshippers and thanking God for the birth of the Cathedral.

The group processed up Church Street to St Peter's, where Associate Dean Nkosinathi Ndwandwe prayed at the door. Continuing to the Maze Door of the Cathedral Bishop Rubin prayed and thanked God for "the celebration of 30 years of Christian Witness, unity and worship."

The Eucharist then began, with many more people arriving and joining in. The lessons were

together to lead the celebration of the Eucharist.

Just before the final hymn, three beautiful cakes were carried up to the altar, candles were blown out by the children and "Ma-Dean" Anne Pitout, cut the cakes. One of them was iced in gold and white by Regina Mtshatsha with words from Psalm 133 in English and Zulu.

salads, ice cream and cakes prepared by the Mothers' Union – and even a jumping castle for the children.

From the Cathedral Newsletter with pictures by Mike Hemmings



Concelebrating Clergy

The service ended with Fr Johnson saying grace in kiSwahili for the party that was to follow with music and a magnificent meal of curry, rice,



En route along Church Street

## “Da Vinci” A Pastoral Letter from the Bishop

There are so many suggestions lately that the story of Jesus given us in the New Testament gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) is incomplete or even false. The National Geographic Society released the rediscovered “Gospel of Judas”. Most recently there has been the release of the film “The Da Vinci Code” based on the best selling novel by Dan Brown.

It is not difficult to understand why so many people are seduced by these novelties. We live in an age of unbelief. As GK Chesterton said, when people cease to believe in God it is not that they then believe nothing, but that they will then believe anything. Conspiracy theories – the idea that the government, or the Church, or the authorities have hidden facts away from ordinary people abound.

Should Christians be disturbed? Should they seek to have these books, films and television documentaries banned? Should Christians hold mass demonstrations? Should Christians simply ignore all of these “revelations” as 7-day wonders which will fade away?

The short answer is that to seek to suppress controversial ideas merely makes people tend to believe they are true. Untruths will fade away. There is nothing in them to seriously disturb the heart of our faith. But because some people are perturbed by them, it may help to say why there is nothing to be disturbed about.

The challenge of the Gospel of Judas is of a different order to the challenge posed by Dan Brown’s book. There were very many “gospels” or stories about Jesus floating around in the early centuries of the church. They show us that early Christianity comprised a rich tapestry of emphases and beliefs. But they are not all equally important. From early days the Church maintained that only those texts which were known across the whole church, and which could reliably be connected to those who had known Jesus in his earthly life, were to be regarded as authoritative. Thus we arrive at the “Canonical”, or universally accepted, texts which form our New Testament.

That does not mean that the other writings are never interesting or never contain truth. True, many of them on

examination prove to be trivial. But they may usefully remind us of emphases which were unconsciously suppressed and need to be rediscovered, especially with regard to the place of women in religion and society. (There is, interestingly, a gospel of Mary Magdalene which while not authentically written by her or in her time does remind us that for a long time her important role in the early faith of the church was acknowledged). The recently rediscovered Gospel of Judas, however, is of relatively late origin. It reflects a typically “Gnostic” belief. Gnostics believed that the physical world is a snare and a delusion. They said that most people are enmeshed in that degraded physical world. But a small and elite group of truly enlightened and spiritual people will seek to escape from it. So Judas is portrayed as one who seeks such enlightenment and release, one who is specially close to Jesus. By facilitating the arrest and subsequent execution of Jesus, Judas enables Jesus to be freed from the physical world.

With hindsight we can see how the Gospel of Judas, far from being helpful, reflects unhealthy tendencies which have troubled the church from time to time – the idea that the physical world is unimportant or bad, the idea of a spiritual elite. There was good reason for the early church (which knew of the gospel) rejecting it from the “canon” or agreed body of scripture.

Dan Brown’s book is of a different order. Brown says that it is a work of fiction based on some facts. Brown claims that all of the organizations and all of the documents to which his novel refers are historical and factual – and, of course, some of them are. There really is a Louvre! There really is a chapel at Rosslyn in Scotland. But in its central claims Brown (or his wife who does much of his research) have been deceived. The book suggests that there has long existed a secret society, the Priory of Sion. The Priory is supposed to be a society tracing its roots back to the Knights Templar and the first crusade. The Knights Templar supposedly discovered in Jerusalem the true facts about Jesus – that he married Mary Magdalene, that they had a child or children, and that the church suppressed these facts. The church supported the authority of the Pope and the

spiritual succession of authority through Peter. So the Church, it is alleged, suppressed the idea that a “holy family” existed which could trace its roots back to Jesus.

Supposedly the Church destroyed the Knights Templar (actually it was the King of France, rather than the church who did that). The “holy family” fled to the South of France, but a secret group of persons, often headed by such famous men as Leonardo da Vinci, preserved the truth through the ages to modern times. Brown claims that secret dossiers in the Library of France prove these claims.

Brown based his work almost entirely on a book published a little earlier, The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail, by Lincoln and others. In fact, so closely does Brown follow the earlier book that the authors sued him for plagiarism. But Brown ought to have known that the documents about the Priory of Sion had by the early 1990’s been exposed as a hoax.

The hoax was initiated by a man named Pierre Planchard, a convicted confidence trickster, although others assisted him. He invented the story of the Priory of Sion, and created forged parchments planted in the walls of a church at Rennes-le-Chateau to suggest that the story dated from early times. He created the idea that the descendants of Jesus and Mary Magdalene had married into the French nobility and were part of the Merovingian line of succession to the French throne.

Planchard was a skilled hoaxer. His motives are not clear. Whether he seriously expected people to believe the story and thus support the re-establishment of the French monarchy in place of a republic we do not know. He collaborated with author GMrard de SMde to write books about the Priory and the sacred bloodline behind the Merovingians; and he planted the so called “secret dossiers” in the French National Library. In due course Lincoln discovered these documents in the library and The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail is based on them. In 1993 Planchard admitted, to a French government enquiry into the claims, that it had all been a hoax. Recently de SMde’s son, on a channel 4 television programme in England, confirmed that it was all “pure piffle”.

Did Planchard suck it all out of the air? Perhaps not all of it, although the idea of Mary

and Jesus marrying is a pure invention. There have been legends for centuries in the South of France that Mary Magdalene visited there and died there. Her supposed skull is still preserved in the Basilica at St. Maximin-Ste. Baume in Provence. Other legends say that Mary Magdalene, standing mourning at the foot of the cross, caught the drops of blood of Jesus into a jar which became the Holy Grail. Is there any proof that these legends are true? Of course not. But then there is no proof either that they are not true! The question is, do they add anything useful to our faith?

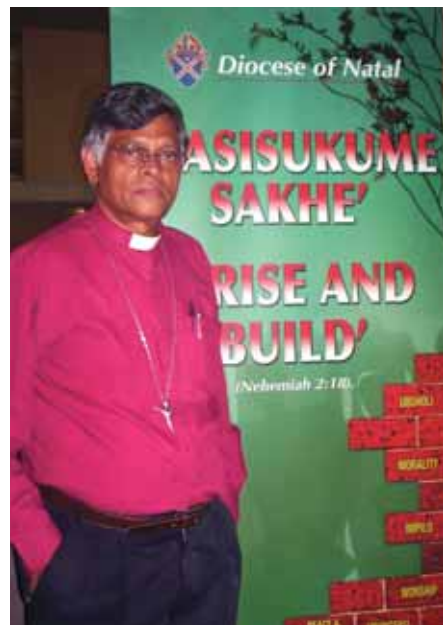
Perhaps the one valuable reminder in all of this is just how central Mary Magdalene was in the events of the resurrection as recorded in the canonical gospels. She is clearly special. There is no good reason at all to connect her with the story of the penitent prostitute. She is one of the few women to be named in the gospels. Luke tells us that she had been ill, perhaps mentally ill, and that Jesus cast out that illness. She became a devoted disciple. When the men disciples had fled, she stood with other women near the cross. She, with other women, goes to minister to his body in the tomb. And amazingly in that male dominated society, she is the first to see the risen Christ. Her story reminds us that for centuries the role of women in the church was indeed reduced.

So we can learn something from all of this. Perhaps we can learn that when a living faith in God fades, people desperately search for something, however trivial, to fill the gap. We can remind ourselves that Mary loved Jesus, as a disciple loves his or her Lord. Jesus loved her. Women matter. There is indeed a holy family – we are all part of it as the children of God. But marriage? Children? Secret documents? All, in the words of de SMre, “just piffle”. Is the book exciting? Yes, it is. Is the book well written? You can be the judge. Is the film any good? The critics say not. Is it all true? Despite the fact that you “read it in a book”, the answer is No! It’s just a story.

*Robert Nattiel*

## “Arise and Build” - Seven Focal Areas

The Bishop has identified seven focal areas for development within the Diocese.



- \* **Health issues** – with a particular focus on HIV and AIDS and other opportunistic diseases.
- \* **Educational issues** – with a particular focus on early childhood development and family literacy.
- \* **Local community development** – utilising an approach based on the creation of sustainable livelihoods which is a comprehensive and holistic people-centred approach to development.
- \* **Land and rural development** – with a particular focus on the development of church land in ways which are sustainable and which will benefit the local communities.
- \* **Environmental factors** – with a particular focus on the impact of development on the natural environment whilst taking cognisance of the social and economic environmental factors as well.
- \* **Peace, justice and reconciliation** - with a focus on building sustainable peace in areas of our Province where there has been violence and by seeking to reconcile different factions and groupings.
- \* **Uprooted people** – with a particular focus on refugees and other displaced people in our cities and Province.

## Visit to the Link Diocese

A team from the Diocese of Natal paid a month-long “friendship visit” to the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham in May and June. Led by Bishop Funginkosi (who joined the team two weeks late due to the death of his son) they were Archdeacon May Laban, Fr Moses Thabethe, Fr Dane Elsworth, Fr Patrick Nene, Fr James Wyllie, Mrs Neli Bam and Mr Frank Kantor.

The aim was to strengthen the Companion Link between the two dioceses by sharing in the life of their diocese through prayer, worship, friendship, special events and by listening to and learning from each other in groups and as individuals. It was a follow-up to the visit to Natal by a team of nineteen people under the leadership of their Bishop George Cassidy in 2003 at the time of the 150th Anniversary Celebrations.

Parishes throughout the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham prepared for the visit by praying:

*“ God of our pilgrim churches, you journey with us all, listening to our prayers, helping us through your Holy Spirit.*

*Be with our visitors from Natal as they come among us, to share their faith and pray with us. Be with our host parishes and people, in our special events, our worship and our informal conversations. Help us to listen and learn, to grow in love and understanding. Deepen our friendship; lead us into new insights; challenge us all afresh; grow in us your vision for your Church in both our Dioceses. Make us people of prayer and mission, of Gospel joy, hope, peace, justice and compassion; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”*

The Team went in pairs to host parishes in different deaneries for two weeks at a time where programmes were arranged including speaking engagements at schools, small groups, Sunday services, and informal get-togethers over meals, outings to historic sites and other places of interest. The central programme included team events at the Minster/Cathedral, participating in special diocesan events such as a clergy study day and helping to run workshops and other ministry events.

The programme was structured to allow time for reflection and receiving spiritual input and renewal, and also enabled the team to spend time to visit Durham Cathedral (the burial place of Cuthbert and the Venerable Bede) and the Holy Island of Lindisfarne where Aidan established a monastery in 635 with twelve other Irish monks from Iona from which they proceeded to evangelise northern England.

On another occasion they met with John Sentamu (the newly enthroned African Archbishop of York), with whom they spent an hour discussing the challenges facing the Church in England and Africa, presenting him with a folder on the Diocese of Natal explaining the vision of *Arise and Build* which he responded to very warmly.

The team returned feeling they had learned a great deal about the link diocese in all its diversity – rural/urban, rich/poor,

resourced/under-resourced, as well as to the challenges facing the Church of England. They recorded some of their key learnings as follows

- England has undergone a fundamental shift from a Christian to a post-Christian society over the past twenty years posing many new challenges for the Church in terms of its message, medium and methodology.
- This shift has led the Church to undertake some critical reflection on the mission and ministry models of the Church in a consumer, technological and increasingly multi-cultural society which has resulted in some very creative and inspiring ways of being and doing church.
- These ‘fresh expressions’ of church are not without their own set of challenges as to what is meant by ‘church’ and the call to be the people of God within a particular locality to witness to the life, death and resurrection of Christ and his call to make disciples of all people.
- The rich sense of history in each parish and in the magnificent minsters and cathedrals we visited have both a positive and negative dimension. On the positive side it provides a wonderful sense of continuity in the Christian faith from the earliest times, and on the negative side can lead to an unhealthy preoccupation with the past and focus on the maintenance aspects of Church life.
- The social justice issues around immigrants, the homeless, the unemployed and growing phenomenon of joblessness i.e. young people who have never engaged in paid employment, are posing new challenges for the Church in terms of its role in a society with highly developed social services.
- Perhaps the biggest challenge facing the Church of England today is how to make the Church a welcoming and inspiring environment for young people to once more encounter the love and grace of God and a spirituality for life in the twenty first century which is both contemplative and responsive to the needs in society through loving acts of service.



The Team paid a visit to the Archbishop of York, The Most Reverend John Sentamu. On the right in the front row is Canon Graham Pigott, the Link Officer in Southwell and behind him is the newly consecrated Bishop of Nottingham, Tony Porter, and his wife Lucille.



The Natal team with members of the Natal Link Committee who helped to organise the programme for their visit. Fr Dane Elsworth (centre) is the Natal Link Officer for Southwell.

## “Theological Sunday”

**ENDOWMENT FUND**  
*“Equipping for Future Ministry”*



**COLLEGE OF THE TRANSFIGURATION**

Provincial Synod has set nominated the 20<sup>th</sup> August as Theological Sunday for the promotion of the need for sound theological education in Southern Africa.

On this day Anglicans throughout the Province are invited to pray for all those involved in the provision of theological education, and all students involved in ministry, give thanks for all educational staff and institutions, and very importantly, offer financial support to the College of the Transfiguration Endowment Fund.

The College provides an environment in which future priests are “formed, informed and transformed, so as to be equipped to minister within church and society in Africa. It is the only Anglican residential College of the CPSA, housing 50 students from cross-cultural backgrounds, and it provides opportunity to participate in an international exchange programme.

The Endowment Fund provides bursaries for students, provides financial assistance to the College for maintenance costs, helps keep fees low to allow more students the opportunity to be educated in a residential setting and helps in the planning for sustainable development of the College.

Donations to the Fund can be made by offering the main or special collection on Theological Sunday and by individual donations or stop orders, with the “strong recommendation that all Anglicans make a contribution on 20 August of a minimum of R10 per person (and any amount more than R10 will of course be greatly appreciated)”.

**The account name is: The College of the Transfiguration, Standard Bank account number 088816931-001, Branch Code 050917.**



## Mission to Seafarers

The Mission to Seafarers this year celebrates the 150th Anniversary of its founding. It all started in 1835 when the Revd Dr John Ashley was holidaying on the Bristol Channel and became curious about who ministered to fishermen and fleets of sailing ships waiting for favourable winds to take them to North America.

Having found that nobody was looking after them, he decided to turn down a Parish he had been offered and carry on a ministry among these seamen. During the next two years Dr Ashley went around ships and lighthouses in that area, holding services and ministering to the spiritual needs of local seamen.

After his retirement in 1850, due to ill health, the Revd Clement Strong served this community for the next twenty three years. But other Clergy had also caught the vision of John Ashley, and so in 1856 the Missions to Seamen was born.

This has grown into a worldwide organisation with Chaplains and staff in 230 ports around the world. More than 100 Seafarers Centres are run as a "home away from home" for people who travel the seas.

In 2000, a decision was taken to change the name to the Mission to Seafarers, as more and more females are being trained in Maritime Colleges and are going to sea, and the Mission wanted to be gender sensitive.

The organisation has grown so large that every year 500 000 seafarers visit our Centres, 65 000 ships are visited, over 100 000 Bibles in different languages are distributed, and nearly 4000 Eucharists are held attended by more than 12500 seafarers. Besides this, Chaplains of the Mission to Seafarers, advise or intervene in over 1000 welfare and justices cases.

Turning to things local, Durban is the busiest harbour in Africa, and possibly in the Southern Hemisphere. There is a wide variety of goods that are imported and exported through our port. More than 4000 ship visit Durban and if you take an average of 25 crew on each ship, it gives

us a potential of reaching 100 000 seafarers.

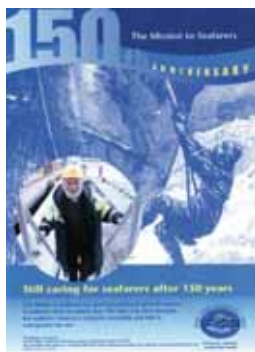
The first Chaplain for Durban, the Revd Alan Williams, was appointed in 1899. Since that time we have had 28 Chaplains serve the Seafaring Community. The longest serving of these is Fr Paul Noel, who started working for the Club in 1963, and only retired in 2002. Fr Paul continues to work part-time for the Mission. The current Chaplain, Revd Des Vaubell was appointed on 1st May 2003.

In 1921, the Mission built its first building in Wellington Road in now what is part of Ushaka Marine World. The building was a small wood and iron structure, which was replaced by lovely double story building in 1949.

In 1981, The Mission to Seafarers joined together with the Apostleship of the Sea, (Roman Catholic) the International Sailors Society, (Methodist, Presbyterian & Congregational Churches), to build a new Ecumenical Centre in the Bayhead area of the Harbour. The Wellington Road facility was closed and sold. Many thousand of Seafarers have been ministered to in these various buildings.

The Chaplains have the sad duty of presiding at funerals and memorial services, but also have been happy to marry couples, where one of them was a seafarer. However, there have been many others who have come in to our centres just for some different company, or have wanted to telephone their families or to receive the sacraments.

We give thanks to God for all the good work that has happened over the past 150 years, and rededicate ourselves for the future.  
**Des Vaubell Chaplain**



## Around the Diocese – and beyond



**Canon Raphael Hess**, Administrator of the Diocese of Saldanha Bay, was elected the first bishop of the new Diocese.

The diocese of St John's has changed its name to The **Diocese of Mthatha**.

After a long spell of ill-health **The Reverend "Steve" Collis** died in Pietermaritzburg on June 8th. During his time as Professor of Accounting at Rhodes University he was ordained as a self-supporting priest, and eventually went into full-time ministry, working in Rhodesia and the Eastern Cape as well as in Natal. He was described as a truly humble man with a dry sense of humour, which won him a long string of friends throughout the country and through all levels of society.

**The Reverend P E Nene** has moved from Wentworth to the Cathedral, and the Reverend S L S Ntshangase has gone from Phoenix to Kwa Mashu.

**Mrs Flora Ngubane**, wife of the Revd The Ngubane of the parish of Umlazi has been elected as the new President of the Mothers' Union to succeed Sister Tabitha Makhatini.

Ethiopian Episcopal Church bishop and former president of the South African Council of Churches **Dr Sigqibo Dwane** and his wife, Ntomi were killed in a head-on collision near Stutterheim. On Sunday 2nd July Bishop Dwane had just left a convention of the church's young women near King William's Town after officially opening it and delivering a soul-stirring sermon. Bishop Dwane, a former Fort Hare University student and former lecturer and head of the St Peter's Anglican Theological College in KwaZulu Natal, was the grandson of a founder of the Order of Ethiopia Church. He was ordained to the priesthood by the Bishop of London, the Right Reverend R C Stopforth, on May 1, 1968, and later obtained his doctorate in theology. In 1982, he was appointed the first bishop of the Order of Ethiopia Church, in Communion with the Anglican Communion.

There are still places available for the **Diocesan Environment Conference** on 25th and 26th August at Koinonia. Application forms are available from Archdeacons, and the closing date is 15th August.

*Dear Anglican News,*

*We had a superb Da Vinci Mass at Manchester Cathedral last night. We had a packed cathedral filled with many 30 year olds as well as older people. We had two people answering questions in a form of a dialogue followed by questions from the floor on issues such as the Gnostic gospels, Council of Nicea, etc. We had some lovely contemporary songs on a piano, followed by a short talk by one of my colleagues.*

*This was followed by the unveiling of a red satin cloth that was unfurled down the centre aisle of the cathedral to symbolise the 'blood line' to Christ – this was linked to the last supper which was set up on the table in front. The congregation was then invited to walk on the cloth and share in a simple 'communion' with just the words of institution being used.*

*In this way the blood line issue was linked to the royal blood line of Christ. It was an inclusive occasion with people of faith, little faith, thinking about faith, etc invited to take communion. It was a very successful event enabling us to 'key into' contemporary British culture.*

**Rogers Govender**



*The old Flying Angel Club in Wellington Road taken in the early '50s.*



*Present Durban Seafarers Mission in the Bayhead area of the Harbour.*

## Durban Chaplains take care of survivors

The Kingstown-registered bulk carrier Alexandros T, which sank 265 nautical miles off the South African East Coast, lost all but seven of the thirty three crew members aboard the ship.

The survivors told a horrifying story of the ship taking on water in heavy seas, and of a large wave that washed them off the ship and away from danger as the ship sank almost immediately after being hit by that wave.

Six of the seven managed to scramble aboard a life raft together, but the bosun who was separated from the other six, also managed to get onto another life raft. Alone in the dark and in bad weather conditions, this must have been a terrifying experience for all of them. There were six Filipinos and a Roumanian.

These seven were picked up later by another bulk carrier, the Fortune Express, which remained in the area while the South African Airforce, under very difficult circumstances because of the bad weather, searched for any other survivors.

Later after the search was abandoned the Fortune Express sailed near to Durban where the crew were picked up and transferred by helicopter to the local Air Force Base.

While they were in Durban, awaiting an inquiry into the loss, the local Mission Chaplains ministered to these very traumatised men. Besides spending time talking to the men and being there for them, they were able to provide them each with a bag of toiletries as well as a phone card and Bibles in Tagalog, (one of the Filipino Languages) and Roumanian.

As always they were tremendously grateful for all the love and support they had been offered, not only by the local Seafarers Missions, but also by the Greek owners, and the local agents.



## From the Canon Missioner

I have been asked, as Canon Missioner, to motivate the people of this Diocese to focus on and engage in mission, making mission the central and guiding principle in the work of the parish.

This calls for “attitudinal transformation” because in recent years the church’s focus shifted from mission to “Development Programmes”, largely due to the fact that the word mission triggered past memories of the expansion of European churches into foreign lands “through the colonial power of military strength and economic exploitation.” and in the last few decades, both the colonizers and the colonized have tried desperately to distance themselves from this period of history.

Today the mainstream churches (such as the Anglican Church) have taken away from mission to development projects as “an expiatory offering for the past sins” so that mission as the spread of the gospel has given way to mission as an instrument of national policy, and since development projects rightly respond to the searing need, they may unwittingly conceal from us cultural and national values that unavoidably accompany them. As the church in Africa, what are feeling guilty about?

We need to be reminded of God’s call to the church to be a sent entity into the world. If this attitude is not at the heart of the church’s life and work, just as it is in the heart of God, then all our activities will be nothing other than maintenance. Once the missionary attitude has been brought back to the centre of the church’s mission, then it will begin to affect every part and nature of the church’s nature and work.

Mission and social action are not mutually exclusive. The history of mission almost in every continent reveals that mission and social action always went hand in hand, hence the establishment of schools, clinics, and other institutions as part of the mission. The church today in the Diocese of Natal is being reminded that God’s mission to the world makes no differentiation between the gospel and social action. These are at the very heart of the church’s vocation in the world. The Gospel without Social Action is like Faith without Works and vice versa.

We are called upon to proclaim the

kingdom of God inaugurated in Jesus the Crucified and Risen Lord in Word and deed, which needs to be reflected in the church’s internal life of eucharistic worship, thanksgiving, intercessory prayer, through our planning for mission and evangelism, through our daily lifestyle of solidarity with the poor, through advocacy, even to confrontation with the powers that oppress human beings.

I dare say that as the Diocese we will fail in our endeavours if we see this just as an imposition from our bishop. We will fail if we do not move from seeing this as a programme. This is and has always been our life-time calling as church, and because it is not a “programme” we should not seek to cast it within a specific time frame.

Some of us have moved parishes into developing their own visions for the coming years, but if our parish visions cannot be fitted into the framework of mission, what are they about, what are they trying to achieve? If we are not aiming to engage the world as Christ would, what then are we trying to do and achieve in His Name?

We need to remember that when we engage with society in God’s Name, we are not there posing as NGO social agencies but as God’s agent for transformation is the world and so there must be a difference between what we do as Church and what NGO’S do. Those we come into contact with must experience the difference, otherwise we might as well join the Govt and set time frames - but remember they are working on the assumption that they will be out office in five year’s time.

Let us hold this in our mind that the Church is God’s Church and if it has forgotten its identity and mandate, and sees social development as separate from the proclamation of the Gospel, then it has no relevance and can offer nothing to today’s world.

**Nkosinathi Ndwandwe**  
\* It has just been announced that Dr Ndwandwe has additionally been appointed as Rector of the large parish of Umlazi



## Much-loved Bishop retires Bishop Elijah’s Moving Farewell

The Mother Church of the Diocese was filled with well-wishing worshippers at a Eucharist on 24<sup>th</sup> June to mark Bishop Elijah’s retirement as a Bishop – though not from active ministry.

Various speakers all drew attention to the very personal nature of his ministry, which can be summed up in the statement from the Mother’s Union saluting his humility and unconditional love.

“For your Chaplaincy from 1997 our sincere gratitude goes to you for a job well done; for your unwavering support even before you were appointed as Mothers Union Chaplain we ask your continuing support both in prayer and deed; for your inspiring sermons we thank God, for your unselfish and selflessness character you have taught us, for your enduring faith; you have gone through most challenging and difficult times in your life and ministry yet you came out victorious; for your outstanding pastoral and leadership qualities to which our success as an organisation is attributable.

We thank Mom Swazi and family, for your support to Baba Twala. He wouldn’t have given so much to the life without you.”



Bishop Elijah and Mom Swazi seated in state for the farewell speeches.



Bishop Elijah moving among the congregation at The Peace.



Bishop Elijah's family pew.



Many invited VIPs.



Together as a threesome for the last time.

## Monastic Life – Enquirers’ Week

The Order of the Holy Cross at Mariya uMama weThemba Monastery in Grahamstown is hosting a special Enquirers’ Week from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> October for all single men who are seeking a life of prayer and exploration of the Benedictine monastic life.

The participants will experience the daily round of prayers of the Community as well as its work and ministry, and study some of the wisdom offered by St. Benedict as

expressed in his Rule. The participants will also have opportunities to speak to the members of the community getting first hand accounts about monastic life and how it is lived today.

There is no fee for the week. Three meals a day and all accommodation are provided by the monastery. “All one has to bring is comfortable and work clothes, a Bible and one’s desire for God. We will provide the rest.”

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# The Anglican Church in America Controversial General Synod



## Woman elected Presiding Bishop

The Episcopal Church, 30 years after it allowed women to become priests and bishops, has elected a woman as its Presiding [i.e. Arch] Bishop.

Katharine Jefferts Schori, Bishop of the Diocese of Nevada, was elected the 26th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, June 18.. She is the first woman to hold the top post in the church's nearly 400-year history. Her nine-year term officially begins November 1st 2006; she will be invested and seated November 4th during a liturgy at Washington National Cathedral.

Born in 1954 in Pensacola, Florida, and married to mathematician Richard Miles Schori in 1979, they have one child, Katharine Johanna, 24, who is a second lieutenant and pilot in the U.S. Air Force.

She received a B.S. in biology from Stanford University, an M.S. in Oceanography from Oregon State University, a Ph.D. from Oregon State University, an M.Div. from Church Divinity School of the Pacific, and a D.D. from Church Divinity School of the Pacific and became Bishop of Nevada in 2001. The Presiding Bishop is elected every nine years to serve as the chief pastor and Primate of the serve as spiritual leader to more than 2.4 million Episcopalians, with responsibility for leadership in initiating and developing church policy and strategy, and for representing church policies, strategies and programs authorized by the General Convention.

## Ecumenical Reactions

Relationships between the Episcopal Church and other Christian denominations, both in the United States and beyond, do not seem to be negatively affected because of the election of a woman. according to ecumenists attending General Convention.

Roman Catholic Bishop Edward Clark of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles said the impact was made 30 years ago when the Episcopal Church chose to ordain women as bishops. "With a woman bishop now becoming Presiding Bishop, I don't see that adding any complications to our relationship," he said.

"She seems to have some very good talents for working with people, and that will stand her in very good stead."

The Rev. Lowell Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), relayed Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson's delight in hearing news of the election.

Bishop Joris Vercammen, Old Catholic Archbishop of Utrecht, described the election as a "minor" decision. "The major decision was made 30 years ago in accepting female bishops," he said. "If you have someone among the bishops who has the capacity to be the Presiding Bishop, and it's a woman, you have to elect that person. You elected your best bishop, and I don't have any critical

commentary on that."

"No one was interested in making this a historic decision or a historic step," he said. "No one was interested in shocking fellow Christians or other churches."

## Divorced Bishop

At The General Convention the meeting gave its consent to the ordination and consecration of the Rev. Canon Barry L. Beisner to become bishop coadjutor of the Diocese of Northern California, although questions have arisen since Beisner's election because he has been divorced twice and is married for a third time.

"I'm aware of the controversy attached to my consent and aware my presence is not altogether welcomed by everyone, he said after his election. Thank you for your gracious willingness to receive me," Beisner told the House of Bishops after he got its approval. His wife, the Rev. Ann Hallisey, was with him.

"I pledge to those who might be a little unsettled by my presence that I am praying and working for every opportunity to begin relationships of trust. I pledge to you that I will do everything in my power to assist you in working for the benefit of this church which I know we all love so."

Six members of the committee that had been responsible for approving the election recorded their opposition, however, on the grounds that it could imply a weakening of the teachings of the Episcopal Church on the lifelong sanctity of marriage; could cause pain to divorced persons and to traumatized children shuttled between one home and another, was likely would strain the bonds of affection within the Anglican Communion; could compromise his ability to pass judgment on those seeking remarriage in the church and might provide far too much room for his conscience to be compromised by his prior failures.

Some who opposed Beisner during debate in the House of Deputies June 20 said they did not criticize him personally, but believe his marital history disqualified him from the office of bishop. The Rev. Adam Trambley, a deputy from Northwestern Pennsylvania, said "Bishop-elect Beisner has made it clear he is a clay vessel broken by sin, but redeemed by Christ's love." He also noted the Windsor Report said the fact of divorce and remarriage is not, per se, a key criterion in electing bishops across the Anglican Communion.

## Controversial ordinations

General Convention approved a resolution that calls on bishops and Standing Committees to "exercise restraint by not consenting to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church and will lead to further strains on communion."

Presiding bishop Griswold said, in presenting the resolution. "We must now act with generosity and imagination so that our actions are a clearer reflection of the willingness of the

majority of us to relinquish something in order to serve a larger purpose."

Presiding Bishop elect, Jefferts Schor said "I am fully committed to the full inclusion of gay and lesbian Christians in this church, and I certainly don't understand adopting this resolution as slamming the door.

The resolution as originally worded would have urged bishops and dioceses to refrain from electing bishops "whose manner of life presents a wider challenge to the wider church." It also would have directed the church not to develop rites for blessing same-sex unions. It affirmed the need to provide pastoral care for gay and lesbian Episcopalians – and at the same time apologized to gays and lesbians for those decisions.

The Windsor Report had invited the Episcopal Church "to effect a moratorium on the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate who is living in a same-gender union until some new consensus in the Anglican Communion emerges"

## The Archbishop of Canterbury's Reaction

The Archbishop of Canterbury has set out his thinking in great detail on the future of the Anglican Communion in the wake of the deliberations in the United States on the Windsor Report and the Anglican Communion at the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church (USA). What follows are only brief extracts:

He says that the strength of the Anglican tradition has been in maintaining a balance between the absolute priority of the Bible, a catholic loyalty to the sacraments and a habit of cultural sensitivity and intellectual flexibility, and he acknowledges that the debate following the consecration of a practising gay bishop has posed challenges for the unity of the church. He stresses that the key issue now for the church is not about the human rights of homosexual people, but about how the church makes decisions in a responsible way.

"Whatever the presenting issue, no member Church can make significant decisions unilaterally and still expect this to make no difference to how it is regarded in the fellowship.....Some actions – and sacramental actions in particular – just do have the effect of putting a Church outside or even across the central stream of the life they have shared with other Churches."

He favours the exploration of a formal Covenant agreement between the Provinces of the Anglican Communion as providing a possible way forward. Under such a scheme, member provinces that chose to would make a formal but voluntary commitment to each other, and stresses that the matter cannot be resolved by his decree:

"The idea of an Archbishop of Canterbury resolving any of this by decree is misplaced, however tempting for many. The Archbishop of

Canterbury presides and convenes in the Communion, and may outline the theological framework in which a problem should be addressed; but he must always act collegially, with the bishops of his own local Church and with the primates and the other instruments of communion."

The Primates of the Anglican Communion will meet early next year to consider the matter. In the meantime, a group appointed by the Joint Standing Committee of the ACC and the Primates will be assisting The Archbishop in considering the resolutions of the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church (USA) in response to the questions posed by the Windsor Report.

## Our Archbishop of Cape Town's comment

I am grateful to the Archbishop of Canterbury for his lengthy and careful reflection on being an Anglican today, and look forward to considering this in detail.

However, I would like to stress that constant talk of schism from various quarters does not address the heart of the matter which is living with difference and otherness.

It is our nature as human beings to be diverse and therefore the modern world requires the church to deal with diversity. This reflects the unity and diversity we find within the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in whose image we are created.

We need to be tolerant of difference.

The Anglican Church in Southern Africa knows what it is to live with difference and otherness. We were born in conflict but, in spite of our problems and disagreements, we have agreed on the fundamentals and recognised that we are together despite our differences. You do not find us today divided into a black church and a white church, for example.

At present there is a lack of appreciation for the governing structures of the Anglican Communion. The worldwide Anglican Church is made up of autonomous provinces which make their own laws.

The Episcopal Church in the USA is one of the most democratic of our autonomous provinces. The Diocese of New Hampshire elected Bishop Gene Robinson democratically, according to their constitution and canons. The same can be said of the recent election of the new Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori. Those elections were not illegitimate within the rules of the American church which is an orderly church - as is our church in Southern Africa. There was a clear majority in favour of both candidates.

A proper understanding of how the institutional life of the Anglican Communion has served our spiritual life and ministry is fundamental to avoiding a knee-jerk resorting to talk of schism whenever any disagreements arise among us.

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