

MY DEAR THEOPHILUS

Volume 2/ Issue 7 (July 2018)

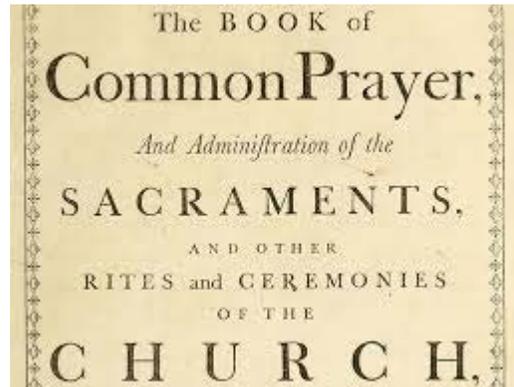
NEWS FROM AROUND THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

- Diocese of Cuba to rejoin the US-based Episcopal Church after historic votes

The Diocese of Cuba, which has been an independent diocese in full membership of the Anglican Communion since 1966, is to rejoin the US-based Episcopal Church (TEC). The decision was taken in two separate votes this week at TEC's bicameral General Convention.

- Young Pakistani Christians hold discussion on the role of youth in nation-building

A group of 40 young Christians from the United Church of Pakistan, the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan, and the Roman Catholic Church have met to discuss the country's forthcoming general elections. The event, on the role of young people in nation building in Pakistan, was organised by the National Council of Churches in Pakistan and the Christian Conference of Asia with the Centre for Social Justice. Organisers say it was designed to build awareness among young Christians and encourage them "to exercise their democratic rights to choose the future leaders of the country."



LEX ORANDI, LEX CREDENDI & VIA MEDIA

Dear Church Family:

Lex orandi, lex credendi. Literally translated from the Latin, it means: The law (or rule) of prayer is the law (or rule) of belief. This has been a maxim in Christianity for nearly two thousand years.

Liturgical worship is not something extra for a Christian; rather, it is the foundation of Christian identity which expresses our highest purpose. Worship reveals what we truly believe and how we view ourselves in relationship to God, one another and the world into which we are sent to carry forward the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ. How the Church worships is a witness to the truth of what the Church professes.

Within the Anglican tradition, we have expressed our doctrinal convictions based on the prayers and liturgy of the Church, *i.e.*, what we pray in our common worship as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer is what we believe. The principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi* functions, according to Richard Hooker (1554-1600), in three prongs: Scripture, the tradition of

the Church, and reason. Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, III.8.13-15; V.8.2 (1594, 1597).

Scripture provides the matter upon which our faith is based. Tradition is the guide to our interpretation of Scripture which makes certain that our understanding of Scripture is not a matter of private interpretation, but is in line with that which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all, the test of true catholicity, meaning the universal Church.

Reason is the guide to our contemporary application of Scripture and tradition. However, reason is not an independent source of authority that is the arbiter of truth; it is the tool and the method by which we apply the truth based in Scripture and interpreted by tradition to our contemporary experience. Therefore, this framework is intended to enable Anglicanism to construct a theology that is pragmatic, focused on the institution of the Church, yet engaged with the world with the faith as handed down by the Apostles.

In addition to the above, Anglicanism is also known as the *via media*, the middle way. It was considered the way between extremes. The middle way allows us to synthesize Christian truths into a central core, rather than focusing on extremes. In *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Richard Hooker argued that Anglicanism retains the best of Roman Catholicism (liturgy and tradition) and Protestantism (authority of Scripture and justification). Church historian and theologian the Rev. Dr. Alister McGrath has argued that Anglicanism at its best avoids both fundamentalism and liberalism, the first of which rejects culture and the latter of which adopts too much culture.

One of the best examples of this can be found in the life and ministry of John Wesley, who lived and died an Anglican priest. John Wesley's unique Evangelical Anglicanism comes to light in his ability to find a synthesis between radical extremes and paradoxes, such as divine sovereignty and free will, evangelical and sacramental, and saving and sanctifying grace. To be an Anglican is to understand and to live in the tension of the paradoxes of the Christian faith by employing the *via media*. See Dr. Winfield Bevins, Director of Church Planting at Asbury Seminary, *Whatever happened to the Anglican Via Media?* (Jan. 30, 2018).

Historically, Anglicanism offered a balanced faith that brought together the best of the Christian traditions. There was a unique balance of unity and diversity in Anglicanism through the *via media* bringing together the different streams within Anglicanism: Catholic, Evangelical, Broad, and Charismatic. *Id.*

George Carey, a former Archbishop of Canterbury, has said:

The Anglican tradition is a significant Reformation tradition within worldwide Christianity; Its *via media* approach to truth-holding the tension between "Catholic" and "low church" is a gift of God to the world; its tradition of tolerance and comprehensiveness is a sign of hope; its loose federation of churches avoids the extremes of hierarchy-ism on the one hand and the problems of nonconformity on the other; it ensures we keep our eyes

looking outwards to the needy of God's world; it provides a richness of liturgy; and it has a strong tradition of linking love of God to love of neighbor in practical service.

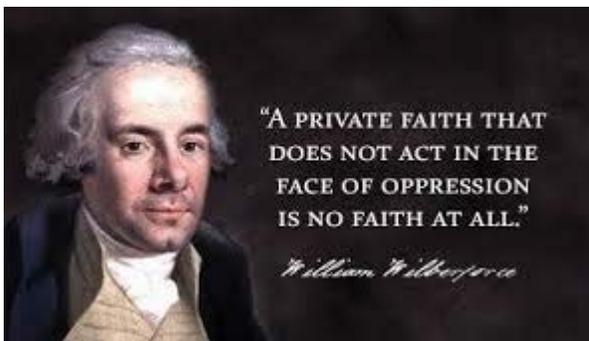
Therefore, undertaking revision of the Book of Common Prayer can only be undertaken keeping in mind that what we pray is what we believe and that the Church is to be guided by Scripture, tradition and reason. The Church does not change for the sake of change. Change only occurs to bring the Church back into line with Scripture, tradition and reason.

Additionally, the goal of the *via media* was to prevent the Church from moving to extremes, to prevent the Church assimilating with the society around it on the one hand, or entrenching into a past for the sake for the sake of nostalgia. It would appear that within the past 20 years, we have been far from successful in this regard. It is time to regain the balance first and foremost at the parish level.

Within the Anglican tradition, even though people disagreed about matters, we could come together with civility at the altar and worship together in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer which expressed what we believed. It seems that perhaps many have forgotten this, and we all need to be reminded of *lex orandi, lex credendi* and the *via media*.

Your servant in Christ,

The Rev. Chester J. Makowski, Rector



**FEATURED HOLY PERSON
OF THE MONTH
WILLIAM WILBERFORCE
30 July**

On the 30th of July, the Episcopal Church remembers the life and ministry of William Wilberforce (24 August 1759 – 29 July 1833) who lead the cause of the abolition of slavery in the United Kingdom. James Kiefer writes:

A turning point in his religious life was a tour of Europe. In the luggage of a travelling companion he saw a copy of William Law's book, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. He asked his friend, "What is this?" and received the answer, "One of the best books ever written." The two of them agreed to read it together

on the journey, and Wilberforce embarked on a lifelong program of setting aside Sundays and an interval each morning on arising for prayer and religious reading. He considered his options, including the clergy, and was persuaded by Christian friends that his calling was to serve God through politics. He was a major supporter of programs for popular education, overseas missions, parliamentary reform, and religious liberty. He is best known, however, for his untiring commitment to the abolition of slavery and the slave trade.

By the late 1700s, the economics of slavery were so entrenched that only a handful of people thought anything could be done about it. That handful included William Wilberforce. He began to see his life's purpose: "My walk is a public one," he wrote in his diary. "My business is in the world, and I must mix in the assemblies of men or quit the post which Providence seems to have assigned me."

Under the influence of Thomas Clarkson, he became absorbed with the issue of slavery. Wilberforce wrote, 'So enormous, so dreadful, so irremediable did the trade's wickedness appear that my own mind was completely made up for abolition. Let the consequences be what they would: I from this time determined that I would never rest until I had effected its abolition.'

He wrote: "I am disturbed when I see the majority of so-called Christians having such little understanding of the real nature of the faith they profess. Faith is a subject of such importance that we should not ignore it because of the distractions or the hectic pace of our lives. ... Surely the principles of Christianity lead to action as well as meditation."

He introduced his first anti-slavery motion in the House of Commons in 1788, in a 3 1/2 hour oration that concluded: "Sir, when we think of eternity and the future consequence of all human conduct, what is there in this life that shall make any man contradict the dictates of his conscience, the principles of justice and the law of God!"

The motion was defeated. Wilberforce brought it up again every year for 18 years, until the slave trade was finally abolished on 25 March 1806. He continued the



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campaign against slavery itself, and the bill for the abolition of all slavery in British territories passed its crucial vote just four days before his death on the 29th of July in 1833.

Let us pray: Let your continual mercy, O Lord, kindle in your Church the never-failing gift of love, that we, following the example of your servant William Wilberforce, may have grace to defend the poor and maintain the cause of those who have no helper; for the sake of him who gave his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

THE WILD GOOSE

This is a 14 part series featuring Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR, a nationally known author and speaker. He spends much of his time helping others come to know God's love for them through preaching, writing, CDs, and other spiritual outreaches. He is a member of the Sacred Heart Province of Franciscan Friars of the Third Order Regular. He is presently the director of Franciscan Pathways, an evangelistic outreach of his Franciscan Community.



July 5th - 13th, 2018
Austin, Texas

A. NO PRAYER BOOK REVISION

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald of *The Living Church* (10 July 2018)

The House of Bishops voted Tuesday not to revise the 1979 Book of Common Prayer but to forge ahead with a new “liturgical revision” project that will include “creation of alternative texts to offer the wider church.”

On a voice vote that sounded unanimous, bishops approved a complete overhaul of Resolution A068, the prayer book revision plan that passed the House of Deputies on Friday. The bishops’ vote for a radically different approach will take effect only if a conference committee between the two houses can negotiate an agreement.

The bishops’ alternative emerged through an amendment offered by Texas Bishop Andy Doyle. His plan calls for memorializing the 1979 book “as a Prayer Book of the church preserving the psalter, liturgies, The Lambeth Quadrilateral, Historic Documents, and Trinitarian Formularies ensuring its continued use.”

“It just made a lot of sense to leave it this way,” Doyle told his colleagues. “What I heard yesterday from many bishops in this house was a desire to continue to use the 1979 but not let that hold us back.”

The bishops’ resolution would create a Task Force on Liturgical and Prayer Book Revision that will report to General Convention in 2021. It would encourage bishops to engage in experimentation with worshipping communities, and it urges all dioceses to establish liturgical commissions to collect liturgical resources for sharing with the wider church. The plan calls for canons to be modified to allow for their adoption.

The substitution seemed to reassure the many bishops who expressed anxiety July 9 at the prospect of fumbling or doing harm in a grand revision project.

The amended version of A068 “honors what is good and creates a space for innovation,” said Bishop Rob Wright of Atlanta, who had spoken against the deputies’ revision plan on Monday. “I think it threads that needle.”

The text of the amendment includes a nod to Doyle's promise that the initiative would build on the 1979 prayer book's tradition, not replace it.

“Liturgical and Prayer Book revision will continue in faithful adherence to the historic rites of the Church Universal as they have been received and interpreted within the Anglican tradition of 1979 Book of Common Prayer,” the bishops’ resolution says, “mindful of our existing ecumenical commitments, while also providing space for, encouraging the submission of, and facilitating the perfection of rites that will arise from the continual movement of the Holy Spirit among us and growing insights of our Church.”

The new initiative would also open the door to a host of new resources, all vying for the imprimatur of the Episcopal Church. The resolution calls for “our liturgical revision [to] utilize inclusive and expansive language and imagery for humanity and divinity.”

What form the results will take remains to be seen, but that open-ended prospect is apparently part of the idea, at least insofar as “emerging technologies” are prescribed in the resolution.

The resolution calls on the Committee for Program, Budget, and Finance (“PB&F”) to appropriate \$200,000 for the initiative. That’s a fraction of the \$1.9 million that the House of Deputies sought for wholesale prayer book revision in the 2019-21 triennium. Even \$200,000 might be a tall ask. Before bishops voted, they received a PB&F update saying that no funds had been earmarked for prayer book revision in the next triennium.

B. SAME SEX MARRIAGE IN ALL DIOCESES

By Kirk Petersen of *The Living Church* (13 July 2018)

Albany Bishop William Love, who passionately but unsuccessfully urged the House of Bishops to reject a resolution on same-sex marriage rites, said he has no plans to leave the Episcopal Church. Love’s anguished afternoon presentation July 11 raised concerns about further division in the church, which has seen tens of thousands of members and tens of millions of dollars lost to infighting and litigation since an openly gay bishop was consecrated in 2003.

The House of Bishops overwhelmingly passed an amended resolution B012 on July 12, which says if a bishop “holds a theological position that does not embrace marriage for same-sex couples,” the bishop “shall invite, as necessary, another bishop of this Church to provide pastoral support to the couple, the Member of the Clergy involved and the congregation or worshipping community in order to fulfill the intention of this resolution that all couples have convenient and reasonable local congregational access to these rites.”

In an exclusive interview with TLC, Love said, “I have not sensed that the Lord is calling me to leave the church. What I have sensed the Lord calling me to do thus far is to remain where I am,

and continue to speak the truth as best I understand it, in as loving a way as I can, and just try to be an instrument through which he can work, in this time of confusion for the Episcopal Church.”

Same-sex marriage has been the focus of intense behind-the-scene discussions throughout General Convention and beforehand, and the issue took time to resolve.

On the first pass July 9, deputies passed the unamended version 96-10 in the clergy order and 97-8 in the lay order. Next, the bishops added a minor amendment to B012, so the House of Deputies had to vote on it again. On July 13, the final day of convention, deputies concurred with the House of Bishops, 99-3 in the clergy order and 101-5 in the lay order.

The amendment clarified that rectors and priests in charge have the authority to not perform same-sex marriages in their churches. All versions of resolutions on same-sex marriage have restated the canonical right of any priest to decline to participate in any marriage ceremony for any reason.

Love welcomed the amendment, but said, “I don’t believe we’ve done the clergy a favor by this.” He added that “up until now, the clergy in the diocese could actually use the bishop as the excuse as to why they can’t go along with or approve a request for a same-sex marriage in their parish.”

Now, he explained, clergy with traditional views on marriage will have to draw that line themselves. Love estimated that 80 percent of the 117 congregations in the Diocese of Albany hold traditional views, while 20 percent are “more in line with where the rest of the church is.”

The original version of B012 emerged from discussions between liberal and conservative bishops that were brokered by Christopher Wells, editor of TLC and executive director of its foundation. Bishop Lawrence Provenzano of Long Island, one of the sponsors of B012, has described himself as one of the most liberal bishops in the church. He told TLC that Wells “helped build the platform of trust.”

“Sitting in a conference room in the Mercer School of Theology in Garden City was Christopher, Greg Brewer, and Larry Provenzano. You couldn’t get those three people in a room. And John Bauerschmidt was linked in,” among others, Provenzano said. Brewer is Bishop of Central Florida and Bauerschmidt is Bishop of Tennessee. Both are among the eight Communion Partner bishops who have refused to authorize same-sex marriage rites in their dioceses.

“I’ve made it a vocation to sustain relationships with folks on all sides of these questions,” Wells said. “The conservatives don’t have any power anymore, so we just are putting this out there as a proposal, recognizing that we are theological minorities.”

The final version of B012 threaded a lot of needles, to the satisfaction of advocates on both sides.

LGBT people and their allies ensured that same-sex marriage rites will be available in every diocese where such marriages are allowed by civil law. They were unsuccessful in queuing the rites for a revised Book of Common Prayer, which left some complaining on social media about being “second-class citizens.”

Conservatives were horrified by the idea of enshrining the rites in the prayer book. Bishop Dan Martins of Springfield has said that including same-sex marriage rites in the prayer book would cross the line from erroneous practice to heresy. The rites will be considered in deliberations about prayer book revision, but any such revision has been taken off the fast track.

The Rev. Susan Russell, a long-time LGBT activist, backed the compromise. “I was vociferously critical of B012 as it was originally drafted,” she said, because it “fell dramatically short of providing the kind of access we wanted for couples in dioceses. The amended version, for me, solved that.”

She was unfazed by the last-minute amendment that clarified the prerogatives of rectors. “That’s canonical — whether we like it or not, that’s how the church works,” she said, adding that rectors have broad authority, and could forbid political rallies or any kind of activism in a congregation’s building. The new language “is not separate but unequal, it is inherently the same.”

There was much debate behind the scenes about the concept of DEPO, or Designated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight, the practice of bringing in a bishop from another diocese to oversee a priest or congregation in conflict with the diocesan bishop.

After the language that bishops unwilling to sanction same-sex marriage “shall invite, as necessary, another bishop of this Church to provide pastoral support,” Wells described that as “DEPO by another name.”

The deputy who introduced the language had, however, denied that it was the same as DEPO. Christopher Hayes, chancellor of the Diocese of California, said DEPO was intended for situations involving a “broken relationship” between a bishop and a priest, whereas B012 envisions bishops and priests continuing their relationships in every way except on same-sex marriage.

In any case, the compromise remains the same: outward delegation on the matter of same-sex marriage. Likewise, the result is the same: marriage rites for all and space for conservatives to persist as conservatives.

Martins, another of the eight Communion Partner bishops, said he found the language of B012 “to be sufficiently broad as to be able to find something like DEPO in it, even though we’re not using that term.” In the debate on the floor, Martins spoke in favor of the version that Love voted against. He said the compromise allows conservative bishops to continue in their roles as chief liturgical teachers in their dioceses, and to avoid direct involvement in same-sex marriage.

The long-term success of B012 may depend in part on whether the conservative bishops adhere to the spirit of its provisions. The phrase “shall invite, as necessary” implies a judgment call on what is necessary.

Love said he did not know exactly how he would respond to the provisions of B012. “I need some time to think and pray, to consult with the standing committee and get a clear sense of how we might best move forward.”

He said he would not change his belief that sexual intimacy is only appropriate within the marriage of a man and a woman. “Whether it’s diocesan canons or church canons, I would argue that God’s word trumps all of the above,” he said.

Russell acknowledged that no minds are likely to change on that core issue. “We live with that tension, because we’re Anglicans,” she said. “And for some of us, that’s why we’re Anglicans, because we want to hold that tension together.”

She expressed hope that, after General Convention, “We can stick a fork in the inclusion wars and move on with being the Jesus Movement.”



PLEASE LET US KNOW IF SOMEONE NEEDS A HOME VISIT

If you know of anyone who needs a home visit because they cannot get to Church, please call the Parish Office, or let Fr. Makowski know. Either Fr. Makowski or one of our Lay Eucharistic Visitors will call on them. If you have a pastoral emergency, please call Fr. Makowski at 713.299.7675.

THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER

Praying is something that we all can do, young and old, rich and poor, tall and short. Please pray for everyone on our Prayer List.



***Every Sunday Is Bring
a Friend to Church
Sunday!***



Don't forget to bring pork and beans for our Mannafest outreach.