



# Chaplain's Blog



**"You can't always get what you want but if you try  
Sometime you find you get what you need."**  
*(from the album 'Let it Bleed' by the Rolling Stones)*

What I really want to do in the blog is to go on a rant about misogyny, bullying, homophobia and a whole raft of other things but I won't: I will save the grumpy old man stuff for another time when I have had time to think some more!

I am beginning this blog at the end of the week of prayer for Christian Unity, a week in which I have probably done more chaplaincy work than in the whole of the time I have been chaplain so my musings here were also part of a sermon. (Not as the intercessor said, "at the end of Christian unity we pray for....")

Part of that week has been talking to and praying for individual readers having a tricky time for a variety of different reasons and the rest has been meetings.

I spent last **Saturday** with the Readers in Training at the newly refurbished Old Cathedral School with a fascinating day lead by the diocesan education team.

**Sunday** meant assisting in our Worship for All service – chairs, projector guitar, extension leads and playing catch the grandchild.

On **Monday** I went to Sennen for my supervision group – something needed by all chaplains and spiritual directors. What a wonderful place for a meeting, cosy and overlooking the sea view out to the lighthouse!

**Tuesday** morning was the Readers Steering Group in which we discussed the annual service, the reader's day, quiet day and training updates etc. Then it was off to Wadebridge for the consultation on the search for a new bishop.

I presented a compiled anonymised version of all the submissions from readers with a bullet pointed summary. Andrew Keast, Carrie Tucker, Helen Purchase, Sally Piper and I met for lunch beforehand and went through the opinions and added our own thoughts before we met with the two secretaries for our carefully managed 20 minute slot. I felt that we gave a good account of the breadth of need in Truro Diocese and the needs of Readers in particular.

## The common thread is a Bishop who:

- Values reader ministry and appreciates its breadth.
- Is open to Communion by Extension
- Listens with a sensitive ear
- Is of either gender and is inclusive
- Has an awareness of 'Cornishness' – the distinctive character and problems.
- Will build on the ecumenism built in the diocese especially that with the Methodist Church
- Is theologically 'middle of the road' not too evangelical who will provide balance
- Has an awareness of the diverse nature of Cornwall and its Churches.
- Is aware of the ageing population and the problems they face in keeping buildings in good repair and paying MMF
- There was only really one extreme response asking for a Bishop who supports the line that "gay relationships incur God's wrath and judgment," but it shows the breadth of opinion in the Diocese of Truro.

(Note: the full text of the anonymised submissions will be available on a link on the blog page!  
[www.readers-chaplain.org.uk](http://www.readers-chaplain.org.uk))



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On **Wednesday** I spent the day in Bodmin assisting Mandy Wells leading the C3 safeguarding training, It was great to catch up with some Readers there making sure they were up to date. It was especially good to see my predecessor as chaplain, Chris Kingshot and to meet Ali Rowe, a reader who has moved back to Cornwall and will have her license transferred in October! It was the first time I had trained with Mandy and noted that she has the impressive skill of cutting through the ephemera to the important stuff and as a result we finished early which always feels like a gift somehow! I was intrigued by a few responses, one from an ordained member of the group who in response to how should we treat victims of abuse, suggested that a “discipleship course” might help them to “grow up and move on.” I make no comment- I am still pondering on its implications.

All in all the quality of discussion was good and it was gratifying to hear that matters had been raised that people either did not know or had forgotten about. The venue of St Mary's Hall was comfortable if hard to find.

Still in **Wednesday** I did not have to rush home for the full governing body meeting at 6 pm because of the early finish and even had time to eat something!

On **Thursday** I had a ministry team meeting in Redruth. We have our differences of opinion but I have to say I feel blessed to be part of a team that is so open, honest, inclusive and accepting of the breadth of needs within our congregations.... and our ministers! Listening to other readers this week I appreciate even more how lucky we are!

On **Friday** I did reserve some time for study and as I prayed my way through the week and the discussions with appropriate folks, the problems faced by readers including feelings of being ignored by their incumbents or feeling bullied, I questioned how much unity we really have in the church.

On **Saturday** afternoon I ventured across the ecumenical divide to Redruth Baptist Church where I led them in a foundation safeguarding course. There were representatives from The Grapevine in Illogan and Camborne Fore Street there too. In an effort to make safeguarding a unifying factor I successfully managed not to get drawn into theological debate on Bible Verses but focussed on discipleship.

The thirty or so people on the course were delightful, enthused and determined to get safeguarding right but as Pastor Andrew Chapel mischievously put it, “you are the fist moderate Anglo Catholic to speak in RBC!” He had seen a Facebook post of a quiz for ministers about churchmanship.

Link here..... <https://uquiz.com/bW4Z8e/what-is-your-churchmanship?p=17568>

Actually I probably describe myself as a Liberal Anglican who likes bells and smells, a good tune and some sound theology in preaching and in song.

So where are our differences? Too many to list but let's go for a snapshot!

- Interpretation of the Bible especially literal or not.
- Book of Common prayer / Common Worship / Iona/ Taize
- Music.... traditional hymns, modern songs, repeating choruses or (what I heard the other day) – “The prevalence of Jesus is my Boyfriend” songs.
- View of the sacraments, symbolism, art etc
- Divorce, sexuality, gender
- ....?



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In other words it is impossible for everyone to get what they want.... and in many ways that applies to the new Bishop so to change Sir Mick's words slightly,

"You can't always get what you want but if you **PRAY**  
sometimes you find what you need."

The bottom line is that Jesus tells us to love one another as he has loved us, to love our neighbour as ourselves and that whatever we do to or for even the least of others we also do to or for Him. This is our common ground, our starting point, the thing that will unify us as Christians and enable us to live alongside people of no faith or other faiths in love and understanding.

So I preach to myself.... "try not to rant, be generous in love, in spirit, in heart, in forgiveness and being accepting of the breadth of needs.... including (in love of course) all the silly people who don't think the same way I do!"

Ooops!

Jim

## Some Diary Dates:

### **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March is Vocations Day at the Cathedral.**

There will be a Readers Stand among the many others so if you want to explore vocation in another way or more importantly, send someone along who you think needs to explore a vocation- perhaps even as a Reader!

### **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May: READER DAY in St Petroc's Bodmin.**

I am really looking forward to Reader Day which will focus on prayer. In particular I am looking forward to praying the large labyrinth, and the opportunity to find a quiet corner to chat to groups or individuals. Apparently there will be home made cake and three different kinds of worship!

### **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October- The Reader's Service in the Cathedral.**

### **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November – The Reader's Quiet Day at Epiphany House.**

## Data Protection Issues – The new laws

<https://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/2018/01/changes-to-the-data-protection-law-will-affect-parishes/>

Thoughts anyone?