

LENT 2015

The Sacred Season of Lent is a journey we undertake each year with our Lord Jesus Christ – from His public ministry through His betrayal, passion and death by crucifixion, to His resurrection and ascension to the Father's right hand.

The story has its origins in history and is interwoven with rich symbolism. It is the story of our redemption from the power of evil that began in the Garden of Eden, through the Old Testament teaching on sacrifice that atones for sin and which prophets insisted had moral consequences for those seeking salvation or wholeness. Jesus Christ conquered death and sin, and we are called in the New Testament to walk in his footsteps to fulfilment and glory. In Lent, we make time to survey the wondrous Cross that makes this possible.

Come on the journey at the Cathedral in Lent!

Mondays 9, 16, 23 & 30 March, 5.15pm-6.15pm, in the Cathedral (North Transept).

Not to be missed!

9 March: *The Cross in Scriptures* with Dr Jeremy Hultin

16 March: *The Cross in Poetry* with Professor Christopher Wortham

23 March: *The Cross in Visual Art* with noted artist, Bob Booth

30 March: *The Cross in Music* with Joseph Nolan, Director of Music at St George's Cathedral

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St George's Cathedral Interior
Photo: Andrew Day

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THEOLOGY TODAY

A Newsletter from the Institute of Anglican Studies at St George's Cathedral, Perth
~ committed to building up a well-informed and thinking Anglican Community.

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ECUMENISM AND EUCHARIST

There were high hopes in the heady days following the entrance of the Roman Catholic Church into the ecumenical movement at the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Now at last, ecumenists were saying we may experience heart-felt dialogue between Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant Christians as we all pray for the fulfilment of our Lord's prayer "that they all may be One". But there has been, as Professor Paul Murray of Durham puts it, a significant energy-drain as churches find themselves in a place of apparent impasse.

Churches all seem to wish that others could be more like themselves. The challenge, however, is to discern what it is that we can and must learn from others. This is the only sure path to conflict resolution. The Very Reverend David Richardson, presently Acting Dean of Perth, puts it thus:

"Jesus concludes his instructions on conflict resolution within the church with the words, "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven". How we choose to treat one another when the going gets tough has consequences that far outlast the questions that are the current lines in the sand which we have drawn. We have power to bind and to loose. We can perpetuate the binding of each other into separate camps and polarised positions, and we can loose each other out into a world without the benefit of Christian table fellowship, and deepening divisions for years to come. Or we can loose ourselves from our pride, and our ever-present need to be right. We can loose one another from assumptions and stereotypes and bitterness. We can loose our church communities from their fear of conflict. And then we can bind ourselves together with the unbreakable love of Christ, a body tested, refined, healed, diverse and flourishing with new life.

"The current ecumenical buzzword in ecumenical studies is

"Receptive Ecumenism". It recognises that no one church has the whole truth, and that each of us can learn and needs to receive from the gifts and traditions of the other. Ask not, says receptive ecumenism, how can I help you be better? Ask rather, what do you have that is lacking in me?

"This is what we are about."

Anglicans, and Christians of all varieties, are at their best when they are not overwhelmed by their own opinions. As the author of the following article on Thomas Cranmer points out, we are neither confessional Christians nor Cranmerians. We are reformed Catholic Christians on a journey who need what others can share with us.

The Right Reverend Brian Kyme, Director, Institute of Anglican Studies, St George's Cathedral.

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ARCHBISHOP THOMAS CRANMER

Any attempt at saying what Anglicanism is will include Thomas Cranmer, or even start with Cranmer. No doubt he would be surprised by this because he didn't see himself as founding anything, let alone starting something new. Cranmer, after all, was the successor of St Augustine and St Anselm and St Alphege and St Theodore and St Dunstan and St Thomas à Becket, the 68th archbishop not the first. He was a reformer to be sure, a renaissance man serving a renaissance prince, a disputing theologian caught up in new learning, the writer of new liturgy and a literary liturgical genius who compiled the first prayer book in English, subtle of mind, timid of spirit, and eventually a martyr, a re-shaper of the Church of England but certainly not its father. Like all reformers, Cranmer was a creature of his time, influenced by what was in the ether, in the latest in European thought, reacting to abuses and exaggerations and wrong turns taken by the institution he headed, and like all reformers he managed to throw out some bits of the baby with the bath-

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water. We human beings find it impossible to correct whatever is amiss without going too far, so it takes time for the pendulum to stop swinging back and forth and come to rest somewhere around the middle. This is what eventually happened in the Elizabethan settlement years after Cranmer was dead and buried, and this more balanced tradition is what we grew up with, or inherit in contemporary Anglicanism. To put it more bluntly: we are inheritors of a Christian tradition set out in *The Book of Common Prayer* of 1662, not in Cranmer's prayer books of 1549 and 1552, and it is the 1662 prayer book which is the standard of doctrine and discipline of the Anglican Church of Australia. As we shall see, this turns out to be rather more significant than it sounds!

Cranmer was born on 2 July 1489 to an old Lincolnshire family. He graduated BA in 1512 and MA in 1515 at Cambridge, and became a fellow of Jesus College. He lost his fellowship when he married, but his wife died in childbirth only a year into the marriage, and his fellowship was restored. He became a Doctor of Divinity, and lecturer and public examiner in theology. He was introduced to Henry VIII by college friends then working at court, as the King was looking to rid himself of Catherine of Aragon after nearly twenty-four years of marriage so that he could marry Anne Boleyn, in the hope of a male heir. To have the marriage declared null and void might have been straightforward enough in normal circumstances, but it just so happened at that time that Pope Clement VII was a prisoner of Catherine's nephew, the Emperor Charles V. Cranmer's bright idea of by-passing Rome by consulting the universities on the validity or otherwise of the marriage delighted Henry, and Cranmer was made chaplain to the Earl of Wiltshire, Anne Boleyn's father.

It was almost by accident, then, that Cranmer emerged from academic obscurity to become a player in what was becoming known as the King's great matter. He accompanied Wiltshire to the Emperor when he met the Pope at Bologna in 1530, and was later sent himself as ambassador to the Emperor in 1532. While in Italy he received his recall. Old Archbishop Warham of Canterbury – at the age of 82, having been primate 29 years – had died in office, and the King had determined to replace him with Cranmer, still only a priest, and just 43 years old. This was a bit awkward as Cranmer had just married in Germany the daughter of the well known Lutheran reformer, Andreas Osiander of Nuremberg, so he delayed his return by nearly two months in the hope that the King would change his mind! Meanwhile, however, the King obtained the necessary Papal Bulls securing his appointment, and Cranmer was consecrated bishop on 30 March 1533, having made a very disingenuous protest beforehand that the oath of obedience to the Pope which he was about to take would not bind him to anything against the King.

If there was any doubt about where Cranmer's loyalties really lay, this was dispelled very quickly when he gave judgment

on 23 May that the King's marriage to Catherine was invalid. Five days later, after a secret inquiry, the new Archbishop pronounced that the marriage to Anne Boleyn was lawful. Life in the nightmare court of Henry VIII had got off to a flying start for Cranmer, and against all odds he would retain the King's favour right to the end, even as all around him heads were rolling – Anne Boleyn, Thomas Cromwell, Thomas More, and Bishop Fisher among them. As it was still illegal for priests and bishops to marry, Margaret Cranmer was kept out of sight and out of mind, giving rise to the story that he had her carried about in a trunk. While the political wheels inexorably turned, exalting English nationalism over European internationalism, and England's absolute and thoroughly catholic monarch over the Pope, Cranmer the quiet scholar turned reforming bishop went about his work methodically, spending whatever time he could in his Lambeth study with his books.

After Henry's death in 1547, while the child Edward VI reigned, Cranmer finally became the real head of the national church, as the young King was sympathetic, and Protector Summerset left ecclesiastical matters entirely to the Primate. Cranmer set about promoting a new book of homilies and a translation of Erasmus's *Paraphrase of the New Testament* for use in churches. He also obtained a vote in Convocation permitting marriage of the clergy, and a unanimous resolution in favour of communion in both kinds was quickly ratified by parliament. This necessitated some revision of the liturgy, still the Latin Mass, and a royal commission was issued to Cranmer and twelve other divines, six of whom were bishops, to prepare an Order of Communion in English, not to replace the old mass but to be inserted into the rite at the appropriate place after the consecration of the bread and wine. This appeared on 8 March 1548, to be followed in 1549 by the first Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and the use of this whole liturgy in English was enforced from Pentecost the same year.

Although he had collaborators and assistants, the archbishop's fingerprints are all over the first and second prayer books. He did, however, have his particular concerns, and chief among them was the Eucharist. For 400 years and more, Anglicans have been escaping Cranmer's eucharistic theology, which is just as well because it is almost incomprehensible to twenty-first century minds. It is, nonetheless, important to have some grasp of the ideas he was working with, because parts of this legacy are enshrined in the 1662 book. The mass as Cranmer inherited it determined his course of action.

This mass had distinctive characteristics –

- completely in Latin rather than English
- the Lord's table had become an altar
- it was non-communicating
- only the priest received communion
- the faithful watched and listened
- priests *said* mass, while the faithful *heard* mass

- the canon or eucharistic prayer was said in complete silence
- a sacrifice for the living and the dead
- the sacrifice of the mass offered again the sacrifice of calvary
- it forgave the sins of the living and helped the dead escape purgatory

In other words, the mass had almost completely drifted away from its origins in the Passover meal, and all the other meals Jesus shared with his friends. 'Do this' was no longer understood as eating bread and wine together in a specific frame of reference. Rather, the sacrifice of Christ was being offered again and again for our salvation, and offered by the priest on our behalf. You could pay to have mass said by the priest for particular persons or causes, and there was no need even to be present – and this is still a feature of ordinary RC life today in many places. The 16th century reformers opposed all this. For them, mass was –

- the gathering of the Lord's elect
- baptised and committed Christians seated around a table
- sharing 'the holy communion' together

The high point of the old Latin mass was –

- consecration and the elevation of the host for adoration

For the reformers, the high point was –

- reception – faithful eating and drinking

For Cranmer, committed to a stepped reformation, this is the process –

- 1548 Order of Communion in English
- inserted into the Latin mass after the consecration
- 1549 First English Prayer Book
- 1552 Second Prayer Book, logical outworking of the first

In 1548 and 1549 the bread and wine are still consecrated before they are received, yet it is when this real presence is met by real faith in the communicants themselves that the sacramental action becomes life-giving. By 1552 nothing at all happens to the bread and wine, because it is all about the communicants who by grace effectually eat the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament, but no longer in any 'real' sense. This was a step too far for most people, however, and after the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559, and the restoration of the monarchy after the long and bloody civil war, the 1662 book wound the clock back to 1549, and there it has remained.

Cranmer had only four years under Edward VI to put his prayer books into use, but now 100 years had passed, and while bishops were abolished and churches vandalised, The Book of Common Prayer had continued in unobtrusive widespread use even when it was illegal. As one

commentator on this period says, it had become part of 'a rhythm of worship, piety, practice, that had earthed itself into the Englishman's consciousness and had sunk deep roots in popular culture.'

Perhaps this is the point to note that Anglicanism is not confessional. We are not Cranmenians, but Anglicans. In a word, we are reformed catholics. Insofar as this touches the Eucharist, the unsophisticated faith of Elizabeth I is more likely to express our faith better than Cranmer's learned wrestlings –

Twas God the word that spake it,
He took the bread and brake it;
And what the word did make it;
That I believe, and take it.

Archbishop Cranmer's most recent biographer, Dairmaid MacCulloch, sums up Cranmer's legacy in this way –

"It was inevitable that the Prayer Book would have a key role in deciding what was good English: it was destined to be one of the most frequently printed and oftenmost heard texts in the language. Whatever its content, it would have become decisive; as it was, the Prayer Book's language was created by an individual with a natural ear for formal prose: for sound and sentence construction. For this reason, Cranmer deserves the gratitude not merely of the Church of England, but of all English speakers throughout the world. Through his connoisseurship, his appreciative pilfering of other people's words and his own adaptations, he created a prose which was self-consciously formal and highly crafted, intended for repeated use until it was polished as smooth as a pebble on the beach. Yet he spared the users of the Prayer Book the worst pomposities of humanism and the sprawling sentence constructions which are only too common in the English prose writers of the sixteenth century. He stands prominently amid a select band of Tudor writers, from Tyndale to Shakespeare, who set English on its future course.

"For all those who criticise his politics, or find his theology alien, it is Cranmer's language which remains as the most enduring monument to Henry VIII's and Edward VI's most faithful servant. Twentieth-century scholarship has reminded us just how fundamental is the structure of language to the way in which we construct our lives and culture. Cranmer's language lies at the heart of our own English-speaking culture, which has now become so central to the destiny of the world."

– Dairmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, pp.631-632

The Reverend Dr David Wood

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NEXT ISSUE:

The next issue of *Theology Today* will feature the contribution of Richard Hooker to the development of Anglicanism.