ISSUES DISCUSSED AT PLENARY IN BRIEF

Schools' funding: An assurance from the Government that Catholic schools will be funded fairly is being sought by the Catholic Education Service (CES). At their plenary in Leeds earlier this month, the bishops expressed concern that due to proposed changes in the way schools are funded and with cuts to the budgets of local authorities, voluntary-aided Catholic schools will lose out. Academies and free schools are funded by central government. The bishops are also concerned that a number of Catholic schools are failing academically and have asked the CES to develop strategies for improvement.

Ordinariate: The ordinariate has insufficient resources to run a principal church, the Archbishop of Westminster has said. Archbishop Vincent Nichols said the ordinariate "would not thank us for simply giving it responsibility for a church it would then have to then maintain and upkeep". He said a principal church for the group was still a possibility but it should not become "an iconic issue". During their meeting last week, the bishops were told that 20 Anglican clergy were preparing to become Catholics and join the ordinariate in the "second wave" of conversions.

Palestine: Archbishop Nichols is lobbying on behalf of Palestinians in the Holy Land who have been told their land will be taken by the Israeli Government. The archbishop said he was making representations for Christian Palestinians losing their homes in Beit Jala, a town on the West Bank.

Prayer: The Bishops of England and Wales have devised a prayer for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee to be read out at Masses on Trinity Sunday. The prayer and more details of the bishops' meeting can be found at *www.thetablet.co.uk*

We've failed abuse victims, bishops admit at meeting

Christopher Lamb

THE HIERARCHY of England and Wales has admitted to failing properly to support the victims of clerical sexual abuse.

After their biannual meeting last week in Leeds, the bishops confessed in a statement that they had not done enough to assist victims.

"Survivors of abuse who come to the Church for pastoral help rightly expect to be welcomed and listened to, and to be understood and supported. As bishops, we acknowledge this has not been adequately developed as an integral part of our safeguarding work," they said.

At a press conference on Friday last week, the Archbishop of Westminster, Vincent Nichols, president of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, stressed that there was a personal commitment of every bishop to respond to victims of abuse. But he said: "What we have not achieved and what we recognise as inadequate is the extent of that response, its consistency and the way it is sustained over longer periods."

During their meeting, the bishops heard a report from the National Catholic Safeguarding Commission (NCSC), the bishops' own body in charge of child protection, which urged them to put greater emphasis on work with abuse victims.

The bishops have now announced a "Care Pathway" for victims to "ensure that the Church responds appropriately and sensitively to their needs at every stage", which Archbishop Nichols said the bishops were "determined to get right".

Over the last 18 months, the NCSC has been meeting victims' groups. However, two of these, Ministry for Clergy and Sex Abuse Survivors and the Lantern Project, have withdrawn from the talks.

Archbishop Nichols said that every bishop had met abuse victims, with one bishop meeting the same two victims twice a year for the past nine years.

In their meeting, the bishops also addressed the problem of religious orders having child protection policies which operate independently of the local diocese. Archbishop Nichols said there is "ongoing work to align safeguarding work in dioceses and safeguarding work in religious orders" so that there will be a "one-Church approach". This, he said, was a "bureaucratic problem" because of the large number of religious orders – 300 – that are autonomous from the local bishop. The plan, he explained, is to have joint safeguarding commissions that oversee both dioceses and religious orders.

The archbishop said both the issue of response to abuse victims and the problem of safeguarding for religious orders had come "into very sharp relief" after the allegations of abuse surrounding Ealing Abbey and St Benedict's School. He called on Fr Laurence Soper, a former abbot of Ealing who failed to keep an appointment with police who want to question him about allegations of abuse, to return to London to allow due process to take place. Meanwhile, the abbot president of the English Benedictine Congregation, Richard Yeo OSB, said it was a "cause of shame and sorrow" that monks had "hurt children in their care". In a homily at Downside Abbey earlier this month, he asked for prayers for those who had been abused and for the students of St Benedict's.

Archbishop praises civil partnerships

THE BISHOPS of England and Wales believe civil partnerships successfully provide a legal protection for those in same-sex relationships, according to the Archbishop of Westminster, *writes Christopher Lamb.*

"We would want to emphasise that civil partnerships actually provide a structure in which people of the same sex who want a lifelong relationship [and] a lifelong partnership can find their place and protection and legal provision," Archbishop Vincent Nichols said at a press conference after the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales' meeting last week.

His comments mark the clearest support that a Catholic bishop has given in favour of civil unions.

Explaining the Church's position on gay marriage, Archbishop Nichols said: "As a Church we are very committed to the notion of equality so that people are treated the same across all the activities of life ... The Church holds great store by the value of commitment in relationships and undertakings that people give. Stability in society depends upon the reliability of commitments that people give. That might be in offering to do a job but especially in their relationships with one another. Equality and commitment are both very important and we fully support them."

But the archbishop said that "equality and commitment do not amount to marriage" and that civil partnerships were "categorically different" from gay marriage, which the bishops oppose. He said he was "very disappointed" that the Government had decided to introduce gay marriage.

The bishops' conference's position on civil partnerships appears to have shifted from 2003 when it told the Government that civil unions would "not promote the common good and we therefore strongly oppose them".

Have your say on the week's big issues on *The Tablet* blog at
www.thetablet.co.uk

Inquiry into RTE's libelling of missionary

Sarah Mac Donald
In Dublin

THE IRISH Minister for Communications, Pat Rabbitte, has ordered an investigation of the state broadcaster RTE over its defamation of a Mill Hill missionary in a programme which purported to unveil the sexual abuse of children by Irish priests in Africa.

The *Prime Time Investigates* programme, which has been suspended by the broadcaster until the end of the year, alleged that Fr Kevin Reynolds, who returned to Ireland from Kenya to serve in Ahascragh parish in Co. Galway 10 years ago, had raped and fathered a child with a teenage Kenyan girl in 1982 and subsequently abandoned both.

The priest strenuously denied the allegation to *Prime Time*'s reporters personally and through his solicitors a number of times ahead of the programme's transmission. However, the programme team pressed ahead with the broadcast despite Fr Reynolds' request for a delay to enable him to take a paternity test to prove his innocence.

Nearly 550,000 people saw "A Mission to Prey" when it was shown on 23 May and more than 300,000 RTE radio listeners heard the allegations repeated the following day on *Morning Ireland*. Fr Reynolds was immediately instructed to step down from ministry. However, a paternity test proved he was not the father of the now adult Kenyan woman. Last week, the 65-year-old priest was vindicated at the High Court in Dublin in his defamation action against RTE. In court, the broadcaster made a formal apology and agreed to pay Fr Reynolds an undisclosed sum of money in compensation for the libel, believed to be in the region of €1 million. The Irish Prime Minister said the episode demonstrated a "grievous" drop in RTE's standards.

The Association of Catholic Priests in Ireland, which worked with Fr Reynolds on his case, has accused sections of the Irish media, including RTE, of a "serious anti-Catholic and anti-priest bias" which has resulted in a one-sided and unfair presentation of issues to do with Church and clergy in recent years.

School falls foul of adjudicator

AN oversubscribed Catholic girls' school has lost the latest stage of an admissions battle with its archdiocese over whether it can continue to take into account voluntary work in the parish by a prospective pupil or her family, *writes Sam Adams*.

The Schools Adjudicator partially upheld complaints against Coloma Convent Girls' School in Croydon, south-east London, by the Archdiocese of Southwark Schools Commission, and a parent, for alleged breaches of the admissions code and failing to heed diocesan guidance. The archdiocese claimed the school had breached the code and failed to follow its guidelines by awarding extra points to those who take part in parish activities, such as reading at Mass and singing in the parish choir, while the parent objected to the awarding of additional points to those who had their children baptised at an early age. It is the second time in two years that the archdiocese has referred Coloma to the adjudicator over its admissions policy.

Nichols underlines Caritas warning on benefit cutbacks

GOVERNMENT BENEFIT cuts will force tens of thousands of families out of their homes and lead to an escalation in debt and mental health problems, according to the bishops' social action agency, *writes Christopher Lamb*.

In a statement, Caritas said that the cut to benefits – meaning that no household can claim more than £500 a week – will harm families and children.

On Wednesday, at a Caritas parliamentary reception, Archbishop Vincent Nichols said that economic austerity was "being felt disproportionately by the most vulnerable". He added that aspects of the "distribution of wealth cause scandal and dismay".

Caritas' concerns about government cuts to benefits echo those of a group of 18 Church of England bishops – backed by the Archbishop of Canterbury – who, in a letter to *The Observer* newspaper, said the cuts could increase child poverty.

IN BRIEF

Bishop Jukes dies

Bishop John Jukes OFM Conv., who championed the work of trade unions and served as an auxiliary in the Diocese of Southwark for almost 20 years, died this week aged 88. A full obituary will appear next week.

Low take-up for Dublin congress

Only 100 Catholics from England and Wales have registered for the International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin next year. Those organising the delegation are hoping for 2,000 attendees at the event which will take place between 10 and 17 June 2012.

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FROM THE ARCHIVE

50 YEARS AGO

The World Council of Churches could hardly, under its constitution, refuse the application of the Russian Orthodox Church; but the admission means a heap of trouble for the World Council. No sooner admitted, the Russians have shown their hand; they are inside to obstruct Christian missionary effort, which is seen as part of the American and European network of association with Asia and Africa. So the Russians, with a singularly bland effrontery not so much ignoring as flatly denying the basic Christian duty to spread the faith and to teach it to all nations, produced a message from the Patriarch Alexei. He said his Church is opposed to missionary effort – unlike the Russian Communist Party – to proselytising and other un-Christian activities. It is ironical that this message should have had to be listened to in Delhi, at a congress that has underlined the missionary activities of Protestant Christianity, and just after the World Council has strengthened its links with the International Missionary Council. No time should be lost in telling the Russians that they do not know the mind of the Founder and His Apostles, and that the Russians themselves would not be Christians today if charitable and apostolic men had not come proselytising among them.

The Tablet, 25 November 1961

100 YEARS AGO

The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society

... Miss Fitzgerald dealt with the idea entertained by many non-Catholics that women were considered a negligible quantity in the Church. She pointed out that nearly 1,400 years ago the Church decided that a woman was a person just as much as a man was ... As to religion having nothing to do with politics, she thought present-day politics in England had a great deal to say to all religion, and to ours in particular. Mr Asquith had openly said his reason for not enfranchising women was that it would so strengthen clericalism. Fr Plater SJ had been pleading for the development of the "social sense" in women, and had pointed out in the Catholic Women's League magazine that women's taking part in public work was in full accordance with the spirit of the Church. To those who disapproved of militant methods, [Miss Fitzgerald] suggested the example of Judith, praised by St Jerome as a symbol of the Church cutting off the head of the Evil One. If she could be with us today, she would make short work of Mr Asquith, Mr Lloyd George and Mr Churchill all combined.

The Tablet, 25 November 1911

Chartres warns priests against new Mass text

Christopher Lamb

THE BISHOP of London has warned his clergy not to use the new translation of the Roman Missal.

In a pastoral letter, Bishop Richard Chartres said he was dismayed to learn that some were planning to adopt the new translation along with the rest of the English-speaking Catholic Church tomorrow, the First Sunday in Advent.

The bishop said that the Missal translation had departed from agreed liturgical texts proposed by the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC), an ecumenical body.

"Priests and parishes which do adopt the new rites ... are making a clear statement of their disassociation not only from the Church of England but from the Roman Communion as well," the bishop said. "This is a pastoral unkindness to the laity and a serious canonical matter." He added that there would be "no persecution" or the creation of "ritual martyrs" but "there will be no opportunity to claim that the bishop's directions have been unclear". A number of Anglo-Catholic parishes use the Roman Rite and one Anglo-Catholic, who wished to remain anonymous, said he thought clergy and parishes would adopt the new translation regardless of the bishop's letter.

Bishop Chartres said he accepted that in the past some had used the older form of the Roman Missal to foster unity between Anglicans and Catholics, but the offer of personal ordinariates to Anglicans to come into full communion with Rome meant there was no logical reason for those remaining in the Church of England to use the new Mass translation. While a number of texts in the 1973 Missal were produced in consultation with the Anglicans via the ELLC, *Liturgiam Authenticam*, the 2001 Vatican instruction on the use of vernacular in the Mass, said translations should "avoid a wording or style that the Catholic faithful would confuse with the manner of speech of non-Catholic ecclesial communities ...".

First new people's Missals go on sale

REDEMPTORIST PUBLICATIONS has won the race to publish the first copies of the people's edition of the new English translation of the Roman Missal in time for its introduction tomorrow, *writes Sam Adams*.

The company beat the two other publishers authorised to produce the book – the Catholic Truth Society (CTS) and HarperCollins – by putting it on sale on Tuesday, and selling more than 3,000 copies in the first 24 hours.

A spokeswoman for Redemptorist, Trish Wilson, said the aim was to publish the Missal in time for the First Sunday in Advent tomorrow, when all prayers at Mass will use the new English text.

The book, *Your Sunday Missal*, costs £19.99 and contains the revised texts for all Sunday services as well as "special" features, such as an introduction to the theme of every Sunday Mass and a treasury of prayers by the Redemptorist's founder St Alphonsus Liguori.

"[The Missal] has flown off the shelves," said Ms Wilson. "We are obviously proud we published it first, but that wasn't our main intention," she said.

Richard Brown, marketing manager for the CTS, said he expected its version of the Sunday Missal to be available by the end of this week, and that it would be the only one to include Latin and English translations of both the Order of Mass and the prayers proper for each feast day. He added that its *Daily Missal* will go on sale in February.

The CTS Sunday Missal will cost £18 in hardback and £25 for a leather-bound version. HarperCollins will publish its Sunday Missal from 22 December in hardback at £16.99 (£25 leather-bound) followed by a *Weekday Missal* from 5 January 2012, also in hardback.

Bishop Arthur Roche, chairman of the International Commission for English in the Liturgy, said he hoped the texts of the Missal would be "a source of prayer and devotion".

Some priests behave like adolescents towards their bishops and can be argumentative, contrary and hurtful, according to a senior priest in Portsmouth Diocese, *writes Elena Curti*.

Mgr Nicholas France, provost of the Portsmouth Cathedral Chapter and Dean in Jersey, said the hurt caused by these "rebellious sons" turned the bishop's mitre to a "crown of thorns". He was delivering a homily at Portsmouth Cathedral last Saturday to mark Bishop Crispian Hollis' seventy-fifth birthday and his imminent retirement. "Some approach him with an almost childlike dependency. Others are more adolescent, more argumentative, contrary and at times hurtful in what they say or do in gestures of independence," said Mgr France. He contrasted the difficult priests with the many permanent deacons in the diocese. "Perhaps his experience of these married men, together with their wives and families, has led Bishop Crispian to support the ordaining of married men to the priesthood.".

Obituary Elizabeth Rendall

While in hospital earlier this year, Elizabeth Rendall was allowed to keep fresh daffodils by her bed even though it was against the rules. The staff, she said, realised that she needed "this living presence in the midst of so much mechanised man-made harshness". Her love for God's Creation was matched by her passion for justice and she integrated these concerns in a rich and varied life right up until her death a week ago.

Elizabeth was born in London and attended the Ursuline Convent in Forest Gate before joining the Ursulines at the age of 18, taking the name Sr Mary Philip. She taught at Ursuline convents and served as headmistress at their school in Wimbledon for six years.

She left in 1968 to become a lecturer in the divinity department of Christ's College of Education in Liverpool. When she was asked to deliver a course in liberation theology, it set her on a path that became her life's work. Throughout the 1970s she was involved in Justice and Peace work at diocesan and national level, and she sat on the Churches World Development Committee.

In the early 1980s, she was part of an Ursuline community in Shotton, North Wales, living alongside local people. In 1983, she decided to leave the Ursulines as she wanted the freedom to campaign more actively on justice issues. She felt more able to do this as a consecrated woman and was consecrated by Archbishop Derek Worlock at theologian Tom Cullinan's simple chapel in the woods of Ince Benet near Liverpool on 23 June 1984.

She went to work for Cafod as the agency was about to embark on a groundbreaking education campaign called Renewing the Earth, looking at the links between development and environment. Elizabeth looked after Cafod's library of periodicals and newspapers and became a key researcher on that campaign. When the Columban eco-theologian Sean McDonagh was brought in as a consultant, the campaign was underpinned by Creation-centred theology, which proved a great inspiration for Elizabeth.

While Elizabeth could appear as an academic and reserved person, she was an intensely passionate woman where the environment or God's Creation were concerned. After leaving Cafod in the mid 1990s, she increasingly threw herself into the mission of promoting ecumenical environmental initiatives, particularly Christian Ecology Link and Operation Noah, a Christian organisation focusing on climate change. She was an active member of the Justice and Peace environment working party, helping to plan events and produce resources. As one friend observed, in her quiet way she "had her finger on the pulse of the Church of the future".

Elizabeth Rendall

In her eighties, Elizabeth pursued a quest about her identity that had vexed her all her life. She found out more about her real father, George Crofts, who died a year after her birth but whose Catholic faith and love for her was keenly felt through educational and financial provision.

Elizabeth's funeral will take place at 11 a.m. on 1 December 2011 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Cambridge Park, Wanstead, E11 2PR.

Elizabeth Alcamia Crofts Rendall, born 10 March 1924, Kensington, west London; died 19 November 2011, South Woodford, north-east London.

Ellen Teague

■ **Ellen Teague chairs the National Justice and Peace Network environment working party.**

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