

Bishop of Pychester's Ad Clerum

(Admonitions to his Clergy)

Dearly Beloved Ministers & Worship Enablers,

It's not easy being the fictional Bishop of a fictitious Diocese. Navigating the Anglican Via Social Media between the Scylla of satirical humour to entertain and provoke thought and the Charybdis of causing offence. Perhaps that's why we bishops tend to sit on the fence.

Pursuant to my earlier request to use purple uplighting only during Lent & Advent, please interpret this 'Guidance' with a modicum of common sense - Ember days are allowed. The proper colours for other Feasts & Seasons would be nice, but the ultra-violet strobes with fluorescent orphreys on Black vestments reported from St Christopher, Upton Pyke, for All Souls' Day was perhaps taking it a bit far.

Please could all Youth Groups return their Liturgical Year Twister games to the Diocesan Office before my pre-Lent Party – it seemed a good idea at the time, but has turned out to be a Safeguarding Nightmare.

I imagine most of you spotted the unfortunate typo in the Diocesan Synod Agenda item - Reviewing the Ban on Blessing Some-Sex Marriages.

I'm sure you have all been abstaining from Caramel Desires while we await the House of Bishops' Teaching Document "Living with Food and Faith" due in 2020. However it seems this will not answer the question everyone is asking; whether eating vegan sausage rolls is right or wrong. Rather it will provide new pedagogical resources to help us bishops think deeply about the hard questions of food ethics.

I see that the St Pythag's Alternative Glossary has defined 'pedagogical' as pertaining to a group of bishops pussy-footing about in the long grass trying to find their croquet balls. This is not very helpful. Indeed, Pychester was proud to beat Lindchester in the Final of the inter-diocese Croquet competition last year.

You may like to know that the Diocese is preparing a bid to the Church Commissioners' Strategic Development Fund for a Resource Church Church Plant. Cathedral-style worship is becoming ever more popular, with its high quality music & liturgy, and options to be anonymous or for busy people to be part of a community without getting nobbled to do lots of jobs. Our Cathedral was full to o'erflowing again this Christmas.

We propose to fit out struggling St Giles Without and a vacant unit on the Pychester Business & Computing Park for state-of-the-art video streaming from the Cathedral. There will be robes & vestments for dressing up, mock choir-stalls, comfy sofas, coffee & cake; all you need for Mindfulness Matins and Cool Choral Evensong, with a roving Canon for that pastoral touch.

Inspired by Exeter Diocese's sporty strapline "Pray, Grow, Serve" (I'm sure it has nothing to do with animal husbandry), and avoiding the pitfalls of Southwell & Notts "Wider, Younger, Deeper", we're launching the Pychester motto "Wiser, Older, Higher".

Please allow me a quick Ad Clerum Advert: The Bishop's wife, writing as Justine Pediment, has a new cassock-ripping novel "Maniple Sins and Wickednesses" coming

out. If you enjoyed her previous one “The Age of Incense” you won't want to miss this sparkling sequel.

As Alan Bennett so memorably said in the 1960s in 'Beyond the Fringe', “Life is like a tin of sardines – we're all looking for the key.” Nowadays, in the age of the ring-pull, how can we express this truth afresh? Perhaps we need to say “Life is like a piece of avant-garde music - ...”

Bless you all, +Ric Pychester <;-)>



Richard Barnes – 20/1/19