

On Wednesday this past week we celebrated the feast of John Keble, a late 19<sup>th</sup> century English Priest who was instrumental in the Oxford Movement, a re-invigorating of the Anglo-Catholic arm of the Church in England. I reflected on the importance of this movement, especially for churches like ours, as we seek to maintain the dignity, beauty and Eucharistic shape of our worship, whilst ensuring we maintain an outward focus towards serving those in need. The following are just some points I offered as to what the Oxford Movement achieved for the church.

It renewed in the Anglican Church a sense of its identity as not only the heirs of the protestant reformation. It also gained a renewed understanding that it had retained the essentials of Catholic order, sacraments and doctrine.

It brought about a renewal in liturgy, worship and sacramental theology in the Anglican Church. The Oxford Movement taught the Anglican Church as a whole to be more Eucharistic in worship.

There was a renewal of and interest in spirituality and personal holiness, a renewed self-sacrificing ideal of priesthood and pastoral ministry, and in many lay organisations, a fostering of devotion, service and missionary outreach.

There was a revival of the Religious Life of monks and nuns, friars and sisters (along with lay societies, associations and oblates), which brought new ways of being Christian, new and prominent roles in the life of the Church particularly for women, new ways of serving the poor and needy, and new ways of reaching the 'unchurched' and preaching the Gospel.

Finally...at the heart of the Catholic Revival in the Anglican Church is the conviction that religion is fun! — that God is good, and that God loves us. Of course that is not unique to Anglo-Catholics, but it is a recognisable characteristic that needs to be fostered. If the world is to be reached with the Gospel it desperately needs Christians who can laugh at themselves. This is a sign of our confidence in ourselves and in God, and a reminder that it is always God's mission we are involved in, not our own.

Maybe we could do with re-visiting these again, in our times, especially the last one, as we give thanks to God for John Keble.

May Richard of Chichester, Frederick Barker, Georgiana Molloy, and all the Saints walk with you this Lent... *Sam*