

# New Start 2010

## A robust Christian faith: standing up to challenges

March 8<sup>th</sup>

### Is every life sacred?

We are exploring the nature of moral discussions. Often the experience can be of people talking past one another in conversations on moral issues: the tone becomes shrill because we don't seem to be able to recognise what each other is claiming. Why is it so hard to talk about morality?

1. Beware of claiming anything is sacred; beware of closing off questions. Tough moral questions are usually an exploration of greyness, rather than a simple stating of black/white. *Should an embryo be regarded as a complete human being from the moment of conception?*
2. The language of Human Rights is coming under scrutiny, especially from the churches. Human Rights originated in a desire to protect vulnerable individuals from the overbearing authority of the state and the Church. *Can secularists and religious traditions agree on what is essential to being human?*
3. The tragedy of one good against another good. Yet recognising and acknowledging that can be the start of an honest engagement with moral difficulty. What happens when your wish to do X disturbs my safety? *The very topical issue of assisted dying: one person's freedom can make others more vulnerable.*
4. Is morality affordable? What to do when there are things that are "right" but too expensive? *Who pays for Human Rights? How to balance the competing claims of a medical treatment for one person in Europe costing tens of thousands of pounds with life-saving intervention in Africa costing pennies?*
5. Morality is not a matter that can be settled in the abstract, independent of who is stating a moral judgement, and the historical climate. *How reliable is moral teaching offered from the Vatican which has been prepared and delivered by celibate men?*

What guidance and signposts can be discovered that enable us to remain as people who are realistic, with ideals, tolerant of others, principled, and not confused?

How do you cope with feeling inadequate in the face of apparently more principled moral voices?

March 15<sup>th</sup>

### Do women belong in the kitchen?

A ridiculous question yet, 2 clergymen recently said: "women should remain silent if questions could be legitimately answered by their husbands" and "high divorce rate can be blamed on women no longer submitting to their husbands".

March 22<sup>nd</sup>

### Beyond sex: permanent, faithful, stable

'Permanent, faithful stable': is that a good starting point for describing what is good about any relationship? What other words might you want to use to guide those who are single or elderly or ....?

March 29<sup>th</sup>

### The Passover Seder Meal

A Passover meal, drawing on our Jewish heritage, marking the Passover, and designed to help us prepare for Holy Week and Easter