

# New Start 2010

## A robust Christian faith: standing up to challenges

### 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”.

1. Don't domesticate the Bible, squeezing out difficult stories, and unifying a complicated changeable history.
  - The female consorts of God were part of the Israelite religion for a period (1 Kings 15.13)
  - Jesus experience of God as “Abba” (‘father’): Mark 14.36, Romans 8.15, Galatians 4.6.
  - Is that experience determinative, normative, or illustrative for Christians?
2. Why are women priests so important?
  - Women can represent Christ and God. The priest as an Icon, a means of grace.
  - The introduction of Women Priests brings to light other issues (feminization of the Church, where are the role models for men).
3. Why are women bishops so important?
  - This change challenges a church which finds changing difficult, attacks vested powers, disturbs all of us as we tend to think of human nature as unaltered/unalterable.
  - But if we were to manage the change about genders better, we might also be able to cope better with retirement, increasing longevity, different patterns of marriage, network and static communities, the priesthood of the elderly.
4. Why is female imagery applied to God so important?
  - This challenges our commitment to the carriers rather than the substance of our faith. See “The shack”, a novel by William Young.
  - The mystical tradition sees God as beyond all language, and warns us against the comforts rooted in images of God (rather than God's own self).
  - The Old Testament also warns us against closeness with God.

*O glorious mother of all the world  
We thank you for the blessing of women  
For women who energize and inspire  
For women who blaze new trails  
For women who march for justice  
for women who question and stir  
For saintly women who have gone before us,  
as companions and disciples of Jesus,  
We give you thanks and praise. Amen.*

### 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