

EDITORIAL

Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion, each of them marking a stage in Christian progress, raise questions which are of theological and practical significance. With the decline in infant baptism and a consequent growth in the number of unbaptised adults discovering their faith and wishing to become fully involved in the life of the Church, the primitive practice of baptism by immersion has been in demand in the Church of England. Many PCCs are having to face aesthetic as well as liturgical problems when seeking to provide a pool for immersion as well as retaining facilities for infant baptism by affusion, neither form of baptism being more effective than the other. The age for Confirmation and the question whether admission to Holy Communion should precede or follow Confirmation also raise significant issues as to the degree of understanding and commitment required on the part of individual Christians. Traditional teaching and recent developments will be considered at the Society's residential conference on *Christian Initiation* to be held in the pleasant setting of York University from 19–21 March. Details appear on page 171. The Bishop of Salisbury, whose article in 3 Ecc LJ 141–148 on baptism and fonts provides a fascinating introduction to some of the topics to be covered by him in the first lecture, will be followed by the Bishop of St Germans and by Chancellor Edwards who will address particular legal problems involving the Church of England.

The recent Lyndwood Lecture by Dr Norman Doe on Canon Law was given in the delightful new lecture theatre in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral, an excellent venue with catering and other facilities. Since then I have received a letter from the President of the Canon Law Society in which the hope is expressed that the two Societies will collaborate even more in the future for the good of the whole Church. Their preference, however, is for meetings during the week as this is more attractive to their largely clerical membership. Our chairman will be entering into discussions on this with leaders of the Canon Law Society and would welcome your views, perhaps when we are resting from our labours during the York weekend.

The Essays on Canon Law in honour of our President were published by the University of Wales Press in November and will be reviewed in the next issue of the Journal by the Archbishop of York. A reception was held during the recent session of the General Synod to mark Bishop Eric's highly significant contribution to the study of canon law throughout his life. Copies of the Essays, along with other recent publications, will be available at the York Conference.

All members, not just those few who were able to attend the 'fringe' meeting sponsored by the Society at the Lambeth Conference, will now be able to read Canon Dr Edward Norman's paper on 'Where does authority reside in the Anglican Communion?' this thought provoking and maybe worrying paper (page 172) will I hope lead to correspondence or other responses in the Journal on this important question.

Finally, it is with sadness that I have to record the death of Canon Peter Boulton, a founder member of the Society and a member of the General Committee since 1991. A good friend ever ready to give wise counsel, he rejoiced in the part played by the Society in the study of canon and ecclesiastical law. He had recently been awarded a master's degree in canon law by the Cardiff Law School whose course under the general supervision of Dr Doe is now fully booked until the millennium. Canon Boulton's quiet and unassuming role as Chaplain at our conferences will be greatly missed.

MICHAEL GOODMAN
Parkside,
Dulwich Common,
London SE21 7EU.