

# Bishop Andrew's Letter

1<sup>st</sup> of March 2011

Dear Friends in Christ,

## Earthquake struck Christchurch

At 12:51pm on Tuesday 22 February 2011, the 6.3-magnitude earthquake hit Christchurch, killing at least 65 people.

3 days after the earthquake, approximately 30 Japanese students were still reported missing. Often appearing on our Japanese TV was the report that the tower of the Anglican Cathedral and some of the walls had collapsed.

The Dean of the Cathedral, the Very Rev. Peter Beck, speaking to the BBC's 5 Live Radio programme said, "while there was no service taking place at the time, there will have been people in the Cathedral, as well as our own staff of course, when this happened. There's a huge amount of dust, it's like a fog inside there. We got all the people out. Nine Cathedral staff were safe; one volunteer had been admitted to hospital. There are piles of rubble, especially where the tower has collapsed. We don't know whether there were people in the tower at the time, but I'm fairly fearful of that. The cathedral, designed 150 years ago by British architect Sir George Gilbert Scott, its part-destruction was unimportant in the light of the earthquake's human cost. A building's a building."

On 25<sup>th</sup>, police reported that there were no more survivors; between 16 to 20 people were killed in the cathedral. Oxford Terrace Baptist, Durham Street Methodist, and Knox Presbyterian churches, which were all being repaired after the September earthquake, have been destroyed. The diocese of Christchurch issued a statement seeking the prayers of the Anglican Communion, and asking to pray for victims of the earthquake, rescue operation and relief activity.

## Prayer and Support

I have never been to New Zealand, however, two things I remember concerning Christchurch. It was the day after the 2008 Lambeth Conference closed, when I was taking breakfast at the cafeteria of Kent University before leaving for London, one bishop came to sit in front of my table. I remembered her because she had resigned as Bishop of Edmonton in Canada in February of 2008, but the diocese of Christchurch elected her as its diocesan bishop. Her enthronement is to take place next month. She also is a member of Windsor Process Commission.

We exchanged a few words about the Anglican Covenant. She was the last bishop I met during the Lambeth Conference.

After I arrived in London, I visited Westminster Abbey to attend Evensong. At the service I heard beautiful voices from the choir stalls and recognized that the choir of that day was not the choir of Westminster Abbey but Christchurch Cathedral. During the summer holiday Christchurch Cathedral choir visits many cathedrals in England in order to perfect its skill.

After the service, I met a daughter of Fr. McDonald who used to be a missionary in

Japan, serving my diocese as well as Osaka.

The architect of Christchurch Cathedral was Gilbert Scott. He also designed the main building of Kelham Theological College where I studied as well as St Pancras station in London.

The Home Page of Christchurch Cathedral reports that the Cathedral has received many messages of support, offers of assistance, and donations, from around the world since the earthquake of Feb 22nd struck.

I also would like to ask you to pray that the Cathedral be restored to its former state and for your support.

## Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus

On 10<sup>th</sup> of February, the eve of the consecration and the installation of the Diocese of Tokyo, a reception was held for the bishop elect Andrew Ohata at an hotel near Shinagawa station in Tokyo. Bishop elect Andrew Ohata was a student of St. Paul's High School when I was a chaplain there 35 years ago. Three students of his age were ordained to the priesthood afterward. But unfortunately two of them dropped out.

At the special meeting of bishops, I said to him that I would like him to achieve his tasks which include taking part in his remaining and as yet unfulfilled ministry.

After the reception, some old students of The Central Theological College in Tokyo gathered together at an Izakaya restaurant (Japanese public restaurant) near the station, sharing memories of studying at the college, so on.

.Coming to the topic of the decline of the Anglican Church of Japan, there are many reasons for this reality, one being the contents of the sermon.

To preach the sermon means to carry the good news of Jesus to the congregation. But now a days, many clergy, from the beginning to the end of the sermon, have no clear direction of the gospel, and merely preach some aspects of moral and ethical issues indicating the circumstances of the current situation of Japan and the world. This attitude prevents the Japanese Anglicans from possessing a strong conviction of the Christian faith and the bond of each others affection. This is, of course, a self-criticism also.

## Learning from the history of the Church of England

The age of the reason in 18<sup>th</sup> Century in England, rationalism was the predominant thinking of that day. Faith which scientists admit unreasonable was denied. For instance, the interpretation of the miracle of Jesus walking on the sea, was that only once God broke Newton's law of gravity. But most people did not get it across. Some clergy understood that the virgin birth, miracles of Jesus and his resurrection were unreasonable. From the pulpit, they preached to the congregation that Jesus was the great moralist in the world.

In addition to that, the bishops enjoyed travelling and fox hunting. Seeing this mass of corruption within the Church, many people were disappointed and left the Church but the clergy did not provide pastoral care for them and left them alone outside of the Church.

From the last half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> a movement of revival of the faith occurred

The first was the Methodist Movement, outside the Church of England, founded by John Wesley and the second was the Oxford Movement led by John Keble, John Newman and Edward Pusey within the Church of England.

In the first movement, John Wesley's emphasis was on repentance, faith, sanctification, and the privilege of full, free salvation for everyone. Many members of the Church of England moved to the Methodist Church. The Oxford Movement attacked the progressive decline of Church life and the spread of Liberalism in theology, arguing that the Church of England was a Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, They discovered anew the lost Christian tradition of faith and Anglican liturgy and theology.

These two Movements made great contributions in reconstructing the Church.

Our diocese also needs such a movement of revival of the faith and rediscovery of Anglican Tradition of faith.

Bishop Andrew