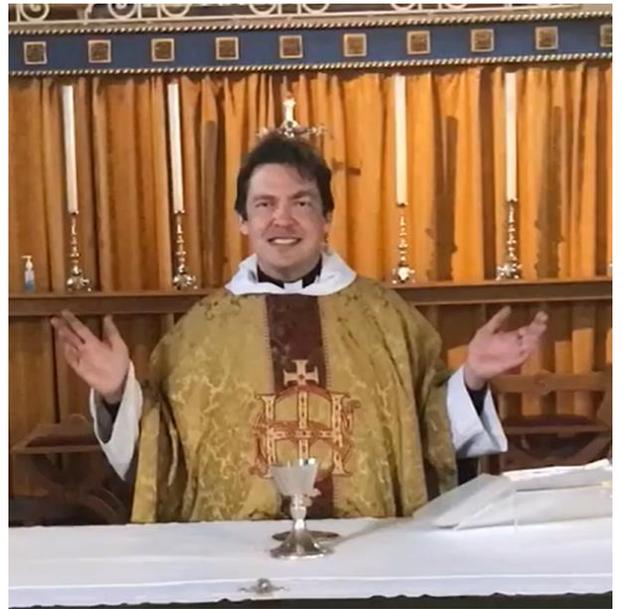


Fr Edmund ('Mund) Cargill Thompson

Vicar St Barnabas Northolt Park

I am an inclusive Anglo-Catholic Charismatic passionate about evangelism.

I have been ordained in the Church of England for 21 years serving in different parts of Greater London across both London and Chelmsford Diocese. Before I was ordained I was a Chartered Accountant. I am Vice Rector (Evangelism) of the Society of Catholic Priests, and a Trustee of On Fire Mission.



My inspirations include 19th Century priests like Father Lowther of St London Docks who took the gospel to the unchurched working classes in the cholera infested slums of the east end; St Dominic who spent all night up in a pub, seeking to win over the inn keeper from Catharism to Christianity (the number of pints drunk is unrecorded by history); and St Francis Xavier, who, whilst European Christians were busy fighting each other over their differences, was busy preaching about Jesus to people in far flung places who had never even heard of him.

I am passionate about evangelism. Bums on seats matter because bums are attached to people and people matter. This should not be seen as a crude measure of success. Our contexts are different. Hill farms are vital for preserving the hill country yet they don't produce the same yields as the super fertile flatlands of the American Midwest. In the same way with churches. My ancestor Henry Williams went a missionary to the Maori in 1823. It took him two years to see a single convert and another five years to see his second one. Had he stayed in England he would have been far more numerically successful. But the Maori church would not have been birthed. We should praise people for working in difficult contexts, not blame them for not being as numerically successful as those working in easier contexts.

Same Sex Marriage

As someone who is passionate about evangelism, I believe that **our current stance on sexuality is not just theologically wrong, but is putting people off Jesus.** I used to be a conservative on this and I respect my conservative colleagues. I have no wish to unchurch them. But I would urge the Church of England to follow the Gamaliel test of Acts 5:38-40 "if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God." Let those of us who wish to marry same sex couples do so. Let my colleagues who are in committed same sex relationships have them recognised as marriages. If we are wrong then we shall become a footnote in history. If we are right, then our openness to people of all sexualities will help us win back this nation for Jesus.

This is not the only time we have got it wrong on weddings. In 1995 the government changed the law so Civil weddings could be conducted in beautiful “approved venues” rather than drab registry offices. Almost overnight the number of church weddings fell: From two thirds of first time marriages being church weddings before the change, to two thirds being civil weddings. We have missed a trick by insisting church weddings are held in church buildings. I would propose we go for the Scottish or American model where the church comes to the couple rather than the couple coming to church.

Paradoxically I am both passionate about **Church Planting** and support many of the objectives of the **Save The Parish** movement. The problem is not **parishes** nor **plants** but **Parkinson’s law** – true of the Church as much of every other institution – the ever expanding growth of the centre.

I believe Bishop Richard Chartres right to have us plant 100 new worshipping communities. I wish more of those plants would come from the Catholic and Sacramental traditions, and I recognise that those of us in the Catholic parts of the Church of England need to take more responsibility for making that happen.

With the Save the Parish movement – I agree on many specific policies but especially on pensions. As a result of a financial crisis, from 1998 onwards the Church Commissioners stopped covering cost of pensions, leading to a hike in parish share. The Commissioners funds have more than recovered and are now very healthy. There are lots of exciting new projects Synod could spend that surplus money on, but before they adopt any new projects, first they need to take back their responsibility to fund pensions. In the post pandemic world this cut in Common Fund could make the difference for many parishes between being financially viable and not being so.

Personal Policy – Divorced Clergy. For many years the CofE has provided “Bishop’s Visitors” to support the divorcing spouses of clergy, but no similar support is provided to the clergy person. As with the (awful) CDM process the Bishop gives up their role of pastoral support because they are the line manager and “neutral arbitrator”. This can lead to serious consequences for clergy in terms of both finances, access to their children and job security, because they do not get the same quality of advice as the Church pays for for their ex spouse. I would bring forward a private members bill for the church to provide Bishops Visitors for the divorcing clergy as well as for their ex spouse.

Remember to use your whole vote

Some of you will wish to give me your first choice vote (thank you).

Others may find me not quite conservative enough or not quite liberal enough. Or not quite Catholic or not quite Charismatic enough. You like what I have to say but someone else gets your first vote. I will say the same thing every other Synod Candidate will be saying to you: General Synod is by transferable vote, so please remember to rank all the candidates (including me). The higher you can rank me the better but wherever you vote for me in your ordering of the candidates: thank you for your vote. If elected I will do best to serve you and the diocese. If you want to ask me anything, my email is father.edmund@gmail.com or my WhatsApp 07908949166

